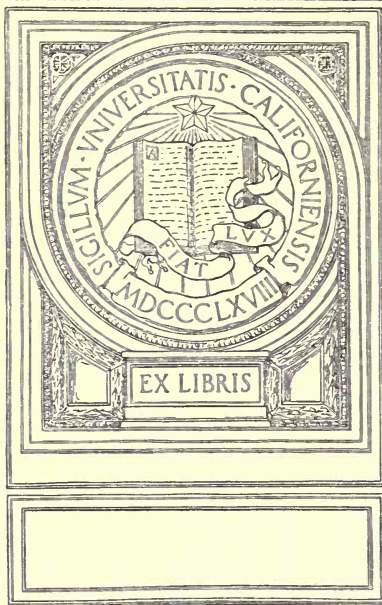


UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
AT LOS ANGELES



FREE THOUGHTS

ON THE SUBJECT OF

A FARTHER REFORMATION

OF THE

CHURCH of ENGLAND;

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In SIX NUMBERS:

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

The REMARKS of the EDITOR.

By the A U T H O R of
A short and safe EXPEDIENT for terminating the pre-
sent Debates about SUBSCRIPTION.

Published by BENJAMIN DAWSON, L.L.D.
Rector of Burgh, in Suffolk.

L O N D O N :

Printed for J. WILKIE, N^o 71, St. Paul's-church-yard.

M.DCC.LXXI. 1771

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P R E F A C E.

IF an apology for the appearance of the following sheets should seem on any account requisite, it can only be, that the subject of them has already been sufficiently discussed. Some may think it has been pursued to an unnecessary, as well as wearisome length. Certain it is, the case of subscription to human articles of religious faith and doctrine, had received from the author of the Confessional so ample and satisfactory an examination, that the controversy occasioned by that signal performance, has served rather to try, and, in the issue, to confirm the validity of the learned writer's arguments, than to throw any additional light upon the subject. This, however, doth not supersede either the propriety or the utility of a farther communication of the sentiments of learned and liberal-minded men, as occasion may offer.

The end of the controversy, it should be remembered, is the improvement of our ecclesiastical establishment, more particularly in the removal of those restraints upon religious freedom, which were unhappily admitted into it at the first, and are suffered to continue in it, though evidently to its discredit and disadvantage, if not immediate danger. Towards this desirable end much new information on the head of subscription, can neither

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P R E F A C E.

be necessary, nor is now to be expected; yet pertinent remarks from some, free and spirited, but decent and respectful remonstrances from others, and the endeavours of all the friends of religious truth and freedom to excite attention to the original principles of protestantism, may contribute much, and are become more seasonable and needful than ever. A manly avowal itself of our attachment to the cause of reformation, may have considerable influence: And I know not but that steadily to countenance it only in this way, on every fair occasion, in the face of a most unreasonable and perverse opposition, may be more conducive to its success, than the brightest display of mere literary abilities in its favour, or even the clearest decision in the way of debate.

It is not so much to convince our adversaries (they appear not to have wanted conviction) as to prevent their sophistry from taking effect upon the minds of others better affected to reformation, that we have undertaken to confute them: And therefore, we are unwilling to stop short at this point, honourable as it is to have gained it. The truest glory remains still to be merited (reaped it cannot be here) by uniformly persisting through life in the support, and contributing, to the utmost of our abilities, and in the free use of all lawful, honest, and Christian means, towards the success of the cause we have engaged in.

How

P R E F A C E.

*How far the Work now submitted to the inspection of the Public is calculated to answer the Editor's intention in its appearance, signified by the foregoing considerations, must be left to the judgement of the same Public. With that intention there will be no doubt of its having been penned. Every page manifests the earnest desire of the Writer to serve the interests of religious truth, and, in subservience to that noblest end, his zeal in behalf of farther reformation in the church. The plain, easy, unaffected manner, in which he delivers his own, and introduces the opinions and observations of others, is almost peculiar to himself, and well worthy of imitation. His uncommon candour in interpreting the obnoxious passages which occur in the writings of those he animadverts upon, cannot escape the notice of his readers, nor fail to meet with general esteem and approbation. This amiable quality in our Author has been remarked on a former occasion *. I am almost tempted — yet not of an uncandid spirit, I trust — to add, that he possesses it, if it were possible, in the extreme. It cannot altoge-*

* See the Preface to, A SHORT and SAFE EXPEDIENT FOR terminating the present debates about SUBSCRIPTIONS.

P R E F A C E.

ther be approved, if it lead him to lose an advantage to the cause of truth, by forbearing sufficiently to expose the spirit and views of its opponents in certain instances.

In laying this work before the Public, it might hardly be reckoned fair dealing to suppress the circumstance of its being a posthumous one; and, on another hand, to declare it, is but to do justice to the reputation of the deceased, in whose behalf the Editor puts in thereby a reasonable claim to some indulgence and allowance for those defects, which his own Remarks may be thought but poorly to supply. To add them, however, seemed not improper, as the Author had signified his intention, not only of requesting me to undertake this publication for him, but also of submitting the manuscripts to my inspection, and for my free sentiments, previous to the final revision of them for the Press.

BENJAMIN DAWSON.

Burgh, August 20, 1771.

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The Reader is desired to take Notice, that the small Figures, 1, 2, 3, &c. refer to the *Editor's Remarks*, which begin at page 133.

E R R A T A.

Pag. 20. l. 24. for *of*, read *if*.

144. l. 28. for *in* answer, read *in an* ANSWER.

FREE THOUGHTS, &c.

N^o. I.

Modern Church-Policy :

CONTAINING

*Articles of opinion and subscription,
formed upon the plan of the Alli-
ance between Church and State,
and more particularly collected
from the sermon of Dr. Balguy
upon the subject.*

I. *Scripture.*

“ **T**HE bare words of *Scripture* will
never enable us to resolve that
variety of doubts and scruples
(some of considerable importance) to which
we shall find ourselves exposed, in relation

B

to

to church-authority *. Even the ablest critics have wasted their time and pains in this unprofitable search ; where neither skill in languages, nor knowledge of antiquity, could contribute any thing to their success.

“ AN accurate description of men’s rights and duties [in this instance] is not to be found in scripture. The knowledge of these is supposed, not taught by the sacred writers. The bible was never intended for such purposes.—The directions of the founders of our holy religion

* In other words, *church-authority* is totally of *political* institution. Which is giving up the long contested point at once, and, in effect, the text into the bargain †.—Nor is this all : The partizans of *Rome* are not so much out in their reckoning, when they assert,

That the Scriptures are obscure, and hard to be understood, even in things necessary. That it belongeth not to all the faithful to search into the meaning of the Scripture. That you cannot know the sense of the Scripture without the interpretation of the church. That the Scripture hath no authority but from the church. That the Scripture is not a sufficient rule for faith without tradition. That if any one shall offer to prove his opinion by the Scriptures, he must be flatly told, that Scripture-arguments are of no avail in theological disputes ; which must rest only on church-authority, and be decided by it. Finally, That the Scriptures are dead characters, a dead letter, an unsensed letter, a shell without kernel, a delphic sword, a leaden rule, a shoe fit for any foot, a nose of wax, that may be moulded into any shape, and made a subject of debate and contention without end.

to us are, for the most part, very general. Even their example must be cautiously urged, in different times, and under different circumstances."

II. *Church and church-authority.*

"A church is a number of persons agreeing to unite in public assemblies for the performance of religious duties *, viz. public instruction, and public worship.—Considered as an institution merely human (in which light alone we now survey it) the divinity of its origin is a circumstance of no moment³.—The first sketch of church-authority, is a power in the society of appointing its ministers. This implies an exclusion of others from the ministerial office; which none can undertake without such appointment: and if any man shall oppose the persons who are appointed lawfully for this office, he renders himself incapable of continuing a member of this

* I have looked into a considerable number of our best English divines, to see under what characters they describe the Christian church in general, or (which must have the same essentials) a Christian church in particular, and do not find any one of them all, from the reformation downward, who describes either church² in that vague and indiscriminate manner, that this modern doctor does.

political society or church; and is therefore liable to be excommunicated.—Yet still it must be observed, that a church thus framed, cannot support her power by *civil sanctions*. She can only take away what she herself has given.”

III. *Ministers of religion.*

“ EVERY form of religion requires attention and study in those who are to teach it⁴. Religion must be made a profession, or no man will be at leisure to learn and to teach it; nor will he give his time in teaching it to the public, unless excited by public rewards⁵. Nor can any minister officiating in a society, invested with a power to prescribe the forms of its public offices, depart in any respect from the public institution, much less act in contradiction to it, without usurping a power not committed to him. If he does this, and much more, if (without any pretence to inspiration) he lives in open war with the national church, of which he professes himself a minister; he violates the trust reposed in him; he acts contrary to the most evident principles of justice and honour, and so renders himself unfit to be trusted. The consequence, deprivation from his office, and

and from the rewards attending it; [and, in some cases, excommunication also *.]

“ THERE is no necessity that the ministers of religion should be appointed by the people; and much expedience in a different method of appointment. To those who are authorized to govern the church, must be committed the care of chusing *fit* persons for discharging the offices of religion †.

* See the canons, and cases in the law-books.—But can it be affirmed upon the *principles of justice and honour*, and with the least degree of common civility and candor, that any of our established ministers in these days, launch out into any of these high crimes and misdemeanours, for which they are to be so severely treated? It may deserve notice, that among the hostilities supposed to be raised by clergymen against the church, immoralities, the most dangerous acts of *open war* against it, are not mentioned. Happy for this church, if there be no delinquents in *this* kind, who continue unmolested to *take her wages*! Are not such as these, if any such there be, in *actual service against her*? And can there be any comparison between the actual mischief done by these to the church, and the sincere kindness and honour so evidently intended to be done to her, by those who with all proper decency, humility and modesty, do only petition for a revival of such particulars as manifestly call for amendments in her?—These, it seems, are not to be *pitied*, when they cannot be *confuted*. To this class of men, the plea for *compassion*, it seems, will not extend. *Serm.* p. 19, 20.

† But what if lay-patrons should present to them *unfit* persons? And should follow their stroke with a *Qu. impedit*?

IV. *Uniformity: Separation.*

“ IT is the business of persons appointed to govern the church *, to prescribe the rules and forms of public religion. It is of the highest importance to the interests of religion, that it should be consistent and uniform in its outward appearance †. Without uniformity, public institutions can never obtain their full effect. The variety of religious forms shakes and subverts the belief of all religion.

“ MEN should be careful not to break the uniformity of public religion. Nothing less than the most essential interests of religion and virtue will justify a *separation*.— The people are not at liberty, while they remain in society, to desert at pleasure their lawful pastors, and flock in crowds to receive instruction from those who have no authority to give it. If they cannot lawfully comply with the terms of communion, let them make an open *separation*. The community has no kind or degree of power over those who care not to continue members of it; nor to cause them to profess

* See the next article.

themselves members of a church, which they conscientiously disobey."

V. Authority of the civil magistrate in matters of religion.

"IT greatly concerns the public peace and safety, that all church-authority should be under the controul of the civil governor: that religious assemblies, as well as others, should be subject to his inspection, and bound by such rules as he shall see fit to impose. The most effectual method of obtaining this security is, to vest the supreme power, civil and ecclesiastical, in the same person. There is nothing in the nature of temporal power, that renders it unfit to be united with spiritual: but on the contrary, much mischief and danger in keeping these two branches of power separate from each other. The magistrate may possess both. The interests of church and state (which are often connected, never opposite,) may be watched by the same eye, and guarded by the same hand. By assuming the particular care of religion, and the supremacy in religious matters, he is enabled to promote the interests both of church and state in the most effectual manner."

VI. *Clergy-maintenance.*

“ FROM the supremacy of the civil magistrate, is derived the provision of a legal maintenance for the ministers of religion. Were *all* the ministers of religion placed in *low* stations of life, it is easy to see, with what neglect they would be treated, and with what prejudice their doctrine would be received. The highest attainments in learning and virtue, could never atone for this one defect (to name no others,) *viz.* ignorance of what is called the *World*.”

VII. *What sect in religion to be countenanced and supported by the civil magistrate.*

“ WHERE the civil and ecclesiastical authority are united in a state, all the members of the same commonwealth should be members also of the *same church*. Where this is impracticable, not the best, but the *largest* sect will naturally demand the protection of the magistrate^s.”

VIII. *Submission to established authority in church-matters.*

“ IN this one point the founders of our
holy

holy religion are clear and explicit, that authority once *established* must be obeyed'.—In vain do men unite in religious communities, if each individual is to retain intire liberty of judging and acting for himself.—It is not however necessary, indeed it is not possible, that even a small church-society [much less a greater] should all *agree* in every particular determination. The *smaller* part therefore must acquiesce in the judgement of the greater."

—“These are only the *out-lines* of *church-policy*: to be filled up in different ways, suited to the infinite varieties of human affairs.”

Some general remarks on the foregoing articles.

THERE are some positions interspersed in them, which are confessedly just, and which no men of sober understanding will ever think of controverting. The scheme in general is of a worldly cast, and is very well calculated, it must be owned, to answer the ends in view, which seem to be those of civil policy only; a scheme which cannot fail of having many zealous and potent abettors, so long as their worldly interests are promoted by it, how much so-

ever

ever the interests of christianity may suffer by such an intermixture of human policy with divine: which is but too visible in many instances. Witness the single one of imposing human articles and confessions upon the belief and consciences of Christians. Which is a manifest infringement of Christian liberty; a liberty so plainly allowed, and so directly countenanced by the Scripture, as well as confirmed by the voice of reason.

WHATEVER opinion this gentleman may have of our established articles, or of the propriety of them to answer his purpose, he appears to have no very favourable one of the writers who have pleaded for the removal of those tests, although they have given sufficient reasons (and such as we presume he cannot fairly overthrow) for the abolishment of an exaction which does so much disservice upon the whole to the Christian cause. An event which serious Christians of every denomination, who have thoroughly studied their religion, and discern the true design of it, cannot but lament, though they cannot remedy the disorder; the powers of this world, in subservience to their worldly policy, chusing to keep it still on foot, and to continue in force the laws enacted in favour of it.

SOME

SOME great men of the church, (one at least of the most learned of her prelates) have been “thought to be of opinion, that those who subscribed to the articles, were not obliged to believe them *true*.” [If so, by the way, What is the *use* of them? And why is *subscription* to them still required? And what can such subscription after all amount to?—*I subscribe to these articles, not as believing them true;—but—what?*] Now are we to suppose that our archdeacon is one of these non-believing subscribers? I would not myself affirm this; but a writer of note has taken that liberty, speaking out his sentiments without mincing. “I have,” saith he, “so good an opinion of Dr. *Balguy*’s good sense, notwithstanding the futility of his reasoning in this performance [the consecration sermon] as to think it is a thousand to one, but that he himself is an unbeliever in *many* of those articles ¹⁰.”

WITH regard to the *eight* articles above exhibited from that sermon, I may, I hope, with sufficient modesty, declare my own opinion; which is this, that supposing those eight articles were to be established by law, and enjoined to be subscribed by all the clergy, we should soon find many books and

pamphlets written on their behalf, explaining, illustrating and commending every one of them, refuting objections, and confirming each article, as usual, with scripture-citations misapplied. Nor can I entertain the least doubt, but the ingenious author of the sermon would appear at the head of the commentators and apologists, being very well qualified to write as large and learned an exposition upon his own, as that celebrated one with which bishop *Burnet* favoured the world on the thirty-nine. His lordship's view in that great attempt, was unquestionably benevolent; being desirous, as far as lay in his power, to alleviate a burthen, which he saw would not in haste be removed from the shoulders of the clergy.

UPON the accidental mention of this great man, who deserved so well from this reverend body, I am inclined to look back a little, and see how they treated him on this very account. With ingratitude enough, for certain, and (which I am sorry to add) with no small degree of ill manners as well as spleen. More particularly, the bigoted part of them in the lower house of convocation, immediately took the alarm, attacked him in form, and mustered up a number of articles against him, which only shewed that their impotence was not inferior

rior to their malevolence. The divines of the old stamp, addicted to schoolmen and systems, and controversial theology, were almost to a man offended with this work; not being able to bear with any sentiments that any way differed from those in which they had been educated. The book, they said, had a dangerous tendency, being full of novel explications, unknown to former churchmen, and abounding with latitudinarian principles, which would infect those of the present and succeeding times. Nay, they went so far as to insinuate, that some parts of the exposition bordered nearly upon heresy:—*Ut ejus expositionis causâ vix Hæreseos notam effugerit magni nominis præsul*, says *Welchman*. Which same *W.* therefore, by the way, takes care not to honour his lordship's name with a place in his list of laudable *authors*, of whom he had availed himself in compiling his notes on the articles. Twice indeed he points to a performance of the bishop, as having been assisted by it, (*viz.* his *Vindication of the ordinations of the church of England*,) but does not once specify his name, as being the author of that valuable treatise.—Here the reader may make his own remarks. There seems to be room enough for them.

As to the exposition itself, archbishop *Tillotson*, a very competent judge, gave honourable testimony to it: and his judgement carried great weight, notwithstanding the censure of convocation, and their low artifices to depreciate it. In the present age, wherein former prejudices are in good measure worn off, in comparison of what they were in those days of infatuation, we hear no more of the *heresy* objected to the bishop; an invention now treated with the contempt it deserves. All such of our modern clergy, as have the happiness not to be attached to the old narrow system, seem to be unanimous in approving the work, and to make the author's sense their own in subscribing. It is supposed, and not without reason, to be now their general standard in that respect. Yet still it is to be wished, that they might be tied down to no other standard than the *Scripture*. Many objections to their character, occasioned by the present injunctions, would hereby be taken off, and greater peace, and more general content, would ensue.—Shall I be pardoned if I ask, What *good* do these impositions do, what *hurt* do they not do, to true christianity?

N° II.

Seasonable memento's tendered to Dr. Balguy, on occasion of his uncandid reflections on the authors of some late writings addressed to the governors of the church of England.

Cum tua pervideas oculis mala lippus inunctis,
Cur in amicorum vitiis tam cernis acutum
Aut aquila aut serpens Epidaurius? At tibi contra
Evenit.—

I. **A**FTER passing a favourable censure upon a set of men, who, as he asserts, “are most of them out of the reach of rational conviction, and are only to be pitied, not confuted,” he is pleased to add in the same breath, “There is however *one* class of men, to whom this plea for compassion will not extend: those I mean, who, without any pretence to inspiration, live in open war with the national church: with that very church, of which they profess themselves ministers, and whose wages

wages they continue to take, though in actual *service* against her."

THIS passage has briefly been touched upon before, though judged scarce to deserve any animadversions. But however, it may be proper on some considerations that have occurred since, to take a different course with the doctor, by reminding him in a gentle manner of some things, which it may concern him, as well as many other clergymen, to take into fair and serious consideration.

IF some of the observations intended to be offered, shall happen to give offence to the learned aggressor, he will, I hope, submit to take the blame to himself, recollecting by whom the assault was made :

Sciat

Responsum non dictum esse, quia læsit prius.

(1) *The plea of compassion, it seems, will not extend to these men.* Unhappy mortals! I should be sorry there should be any of the human race, who should deserve *no* compassion; more especially such men as those whom the doctor has here in his eye. He seems to look upon them as a pestilent set of men, not fit to be trusted with the sacred office, nor allowed to continue members

bers of the church; which, he would have us believe, they are not supporting, but undermining, by the measures they take. —If therefore upon these and the like accounts they deserve no *compassion*, are we to suppose that in this gentleman's opinion they deserve *punishment*? What punishment should that be, and how far ought it to extend? to bonds and imprisonment? to the deprivation of livelihood,—or even of life itself? I would hope better things from a mild, a merciful, and well-natured government, such as this of *England* is allowed by all to be: Nor, I trust, will it ever be in the power of uncompassionate men, to make it, like themselves, merciless.

(2) *They live in open war with the national church; with that very church, of which they profess themselves ministers.* These, it must be owned, are severe strokes, but I hope undeserved. For, is it true that they live in open war, or indeed in any war at all, with the church? By what I have seen, I should think otherwise, and their respectful applications and requests for a review, seem to put the matter out of all doubt. Nor are they enemies to the church, but friends to her, real friends, labouring earnestly for her good, and shewing the greatest zeal, though tempered with the

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greatest

greatest calmness, joined with decency, to serve her true interest; and that, without any gain, or expectation of any, of a temporal nature, for the pains they have taken to attain this most desirable, but neglected end.

(3.) *They continue to take wages of the church, though in actual service against her.*—In *service*: As if they were in *pay*, being set to work by some powerful patrons and encouragers. A supposition void of all probability as well as truth, and not carrying the least appearance of either. Zeal, honest zeal, founded upon much observation and reason, together with a benevolent wish for the advancement of true christianity in this church, appears evidently to have been the sole motive which engaged these good men to enter upon this commendable undertaking, and to pursue it with so much steadiness as they have done.

BUT the gentleman speaks of taking *wages*. Does he take none himself? Why then is he offended, and what has he to object to others, that will not in the final upshot recoil upon himself? He has unwarily made a scourge for his own back; and since he has contrived it for others, it is fit that he himself should, in some measure,

sure, feel the smart of it. He shall therefore be left to the mercy of those who well know how to exercise him to the full, and will be sure to pay him home in his own coin.

Thus, the business of *subscription* has of late been matter of much obloquy against the clergy, as if they prevaricated in that act, in order to become intitled to the bread of the church; to which they have no other right (it is supposed) but either that of conquest, or else because it is given them as a reward of iniquity.

I would here take the liberty to ask, Has our archdeacon never subscribed to the 39 articles? If he has, of which I make no question, then I freely assign him over to the correction of Dr. *Priestley*; who shrewdly guesses how the matter stands, and scruples not to declare to the world his apprehensions about it. Thus he speaks: “ I have so good an opinion of Dr. *Balguy*’s good sense, notwithstanding the futility of his reasoning in this performance [the *Lambeth*-sermon,] as to think it is a thousand to one, but that he himself is an unbeliever in many of those articles.—Who among the clergy, that read and think at all, are supposed to believe one third of the thirty-nine articles of the church of Eng-
C 2
land?

land? "—It might have been expected that a writer, who is so extremely severe [as Dr. B. is] upon those who propose a reformation in the church, while they continue in it, should have expressed some degree of indignation against those who intrude themselves into it by false pretences, subscribing the articles, &c. when they disbelieve and ridicule them.—Men who have come this way into the church, have always proved its firmest friends, [opposers of its reformation.] Having made no bones of their own scruples, they pay no regard to the scruples of others *."

WHAT will the preacher now say? Is this fact or not? If it be, he must in his turn be reminded of his being himself included in the same predicament with the rest of his brethren, and take his share with them in the same condemnation. For he also takes *wages* of the church, and continues taking them, in great plenty too, notwithstanding his having in some respects forfeited his title to them; especially of departing from the original sense of any of her articles, or other doctrines, either by preaching, or writing, or both, may justly

* *Considerations on church-authority*, 1769.

fall under that censure. For the original sense, we are told, and it is strongly insisted on, is and must be the only sense in which we can fairly and honestly subscribe. Else we render the articles, and subscriptions to them, void and of none effect, and both are good for nothing, —— unless for gaining preferment in the church, and acquiring therein the wages of unrighteousness.

WE know the common interrogatories on this occasion : Why do you take the wages of the church ? Why do you eat her bread ? —Why do you not resign ? &c.—These are questions which some men will ask with great assurance, and others will answer as they can, when they are pinched.

DR. B. may consider at his leisure, whether the following reflections may not bear too great a resemblance to some that he knows of, which have been lately thrown out without provocation upon a class of men, who are thought to have deserved better treatment from the aggressor : and let the world judge, whether the application is not much more apposite in the one case, than in the other.—The reflections are transcribed from different treatises lately published. Thus the authors speak without mincing.

" SOME put our *articles* on the rack, to find out meanings never meant.—The doctrines of the church are to be learned from the articles and homilies of the church herself, not from the private opinions of some individuals, who lay hold on the skirt of her garment, call themselves by her name, and live by her revenues."—" Many of the late-born sons of the church, who live under her roof, and feed themselves at her table, do not well relish her *articles*: And yet they think they may safely and conscientiously be subscribed by every individual, who wishes to eat the bread of the church, be his religious opinions what they will."—" Who, through base and self-interested views, swear * to doctrines they never believed, and intrude themselves into the church, in order to suck her breasts, and prey upon her vitals."—" Subtle serpents, who lurk within the bosom of the church, only to prey upon her vitals, and who for the sake of *filthy lucre*, carry on a solemn farce of *subscribing* to articles, which many of the subscribers no more believe

* I know not what this *swearing* may allude to. Does any one *swear* to the truth of the articles?—or of any other doctrines of the church?

than they do mother Goose's tales :—who impiously and hypocritically set their hands to doctrines, which in their hearts they never assented to," &c.

THESE are free reflections indeed. Does Dr. B. approve of them? I will venture to say, he does not. And yet, upon his anti-reforming principles, our articles must never be altered, nor subscriptions to them ever be dismissed out of the church. Consequently, these and the like reflections will always continue to be flung out against the clergy, as perverting the sense of the church, into a sense of their own, and introducing into it a new sort of divinity, which the reformers of it never dreamed of. What an hardship is this, brought upon the clergy in an age of ignorance, and continued upon them in an age of knowledge! And yet, those who endeavour to rid them of such a burden, receive but little thanks, and, what is more, are charged with being in actual service against the church (can you believe it?) for their so doing. A little more civility, a little more consistency in the opposers, would tend more to their credit, as well as to the benefit of the church of *England*.

II. THE archdeacon, I think, has done no great credit either to himself, or to his political church, when he comes to touch upon the subject of excommunication, and deprivation. It is somewhat unhappy that this gentleman is so often making a rod for his own chastisement, when he is contriving and intending it for the chastisement of others. Not aware, we may suppose, of the consequences, nor probably foreseeing how far men will carry on the hint which he unwittingly throws in their way, he renders himself liable to many attacks at law, which, notwithstanding his dignity, would give him much trouble, and probably cost him much money, if others should be inclined to be as severe upon him, as he seems willing to be upon them. Whoever narrowly looks into our laws, examines and considers well our rubrics and canons, and other strict injunctions of church and state, in regard to the office and duties of the clergy, will find that they are not only very numerous, but at the same time many of them very difficult to be performed, especially with that punctilious exactness, with which some men would insist it is necessary to perform them. Shew me a clergyman in all *England* that
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can truly say, laying his hand upon his breast, " All these laws, ordinances, injunctions, rules, rubrics and canons, have I kept, and punctually observed, in all my conduct, ever since I have been in holy orders : I defy any man in *England* to charge me with any the least default, deviation, or transgression in such matters, and to prove them against me, in any court, civil or ecclesiastical, within his Majesty's dominions." Who, or where is the man, among the clergy of these realms, that can make this open and bold appeal ? If there be any such man, he may well deserve, at the next vacancy, to succeed in the archdeaconry of Winchester. Mean while, it is well for the clergy, that the common people (who, notwithstanding the good instructions perpetually given them, are, many of them, very litigious,) do not know the hundredth part of the niceties of the laws respecting the sacred order. Nevertheless, some bold man may arise hereafter, who may think it worth his while, to exhibit to the public view, a large catalogue of articles (much larger than those commonly issued out from the ecclesiastical courts) upon which the church-wardens from thence forward may form their presentments, and thereby experimentally prove to busy meddlers,

dlers, that it is not safe meddling with edged tools, and that some mens weapons may happen in the end to be turned against themselves, by those, who can manage them more dextrously, and with greater force.

N° III.

Concurring sentiments of several learned and judicious persons concerning the right of private judgement in matters of religion.

THE sentiments of Dr. Balguy on this head, have been seen already, and been also in part considered. In an age of so much good sense and free inquiry, one would have little expected to see the cause of liberty discountenanced, or rendered dubious, by a person of so much understanding and learning as the doctor; who might well have been supposed to entertain more liberal sentiments on the subject, and more friendly to the community. We may still hope, that he cannot have many abettors in this particular, among men of thought and examination. It may be proper to exhibit here some few out of many solid and just observations, made by several able divines, expressing a different judgement from his on the present argument.

I. THE

1. THE late learned and respectable Dr. *Berriman*, every one knows, was a staunch friend to our constitution in church and state ;—and at the same time, no enemy to the exertion of the secular power in matters ecclesiastical. Speaking of the exercise of private judgement on religious subjects, he makes these free and just concessions. “ The truth is, all men are obliged to consider seriously, and use all proper methods to inform their *judgement*, as to matters of religion. After this, the conviction of their judgement will become to them a rule of action, and direct them in their respective stations and offices of life.” *Sermon on the authority of the civil powers in matters of religion*, 1722. And he speaks very well to the same purpose, giving a proper caution, in another discourse.—“ Though the use of private judgement be necessary, yet the teachings of a private spirit may be dangerous. And therefore, as I would require no man to believe implicitly, but advise every one to *judge for himself*, in proportion to the reach of his abilities ; so at the same time it is fit he be reminded to call in all proper help and assistance to direct his judgement.” *Sermon to the religious societies*, 1739.

2. ANOTHER divine of note for controversial divinity, and well esteemed by a late metropolitan for his abilities in that way, expresses himself with equal justice and propriety in favour of the rights of private judgement.

“ THE right of the church to determine for her members, does not exclude the rights of *private judgement*. The church hath a right of determining, so far only as she determines *agreeable to the word of God*¹². These rights coincide, and are in effect but one and the same thing; though always with this difference, that the judgement of society¹³ is a judgement of authority, while private judgement is no more than a judgement of discretion or opinion¹⁴. This latter cannot be excluded by the decisions of any authority upon earth: for thoughts are free; and if they are absurd or injurious, they must be accounted for at last to the searcher of all hearts.”—But then, as “such private judgement, he justly observes, will not be *authoritative* or binding to *others*; so, he no less freely acknowledges, the authority of the church in matters of religion, is and must be circumscribed within proper limits.” For instance: “We all grant, says he, that the legislative power

power of the church cannot extend to matters of *doctrine*: which power can reach only to forms and circumstantial, and matters of discipline¹⁵; but *doctrines* rest wholly upon the power of God, and the authority of divine revelation." *Remarks on the principles and spirit of the Confessional, by the Rev. W. Jones,—rector of Pluckley in Kent, 1770, p. 24, 25, 103.*

[THIS occasional mention of *church-authority* (which some zealots have carried to an enormous height, in opposition to the claims of *private judgement*) brings opportunely into my mind, the account given by archbishop Synge of *Daniel Herly*, a poor *Irish* peasant; which I suppose will gratify the reader's curiosity, and furnish him with many useful reflections on these two articles.

"*Daniel*, his grace tells us, was naturally very inquisitive after knowledge of all sorts, as he had opportunity for it: but, above all, he was most carefully attentive to those rational arguments, which by men of all religions are brought to prove the certainty of a life to come, &c. 'Since God,' said he, in one of his conferences with a Romish priest, who would have dissuaded him from turning protestant,—

‘ has given me some degree of reason and understanding, I think myself obliged to make the best *inquiry* I can into the way of salvation ; and if, for want of such inquiry, I should run the hazard of being misled, I cannot but think, that God would punish me for my negligence.—I shall endeavour to make the best use I can of my *bible* ; and as for those passages in it, which are doubtful and difficult, I shall not take upon me to interpret them ; nor will I offer to form any opinion from such passages as are obscure, except they are plainly cleared up to my satisfaction.”

BEING, at another time, pressed by the priest with the *authority of the church* (meaning that of *Rome*,) “ Sir, says *Daniel*, I gather my faith and religion altogether from such passages of *scripture* as are very plain : and these plain passages enable me to understand many more, which otherwise, perhaps, would be obscure and doubtful. I am answerable to *God*, and to none but him, for my honesty and sincerity in this way of proceeding. But I do not see what *authority* any *church* has to impose Her *interpretations* upon Me, when my clearest understanding assures me that these same interpretations are contrary to the plain meaning of the *scripture* itself, and some of them to common

mon sense and reason. I desire you to prove, if you can, that God has given such *authority* as you maintain, to any, and what *church*; and to shew me who it is that is, by God's appointment, to inform me of the true meaning of the church's *interpretations*, in case that I do not at first understand them.—It is absolutely impossible for me to believe any doctrine before I am convinced of the truth of it, either by the reason of the thing itself, or by the *divine authority* of him that teaches it. Matters of *fact* I can and do believe upon the testimony of credible witnesses: but bare *authority*, excepting that of God himself, cannot possibly bring me to the belief of any *religious doctrine*."

SHALL I here tell you how the conference ended? Our author goes on to acquaint us, that the priest, not being able to give a *rational* answer to what *Daniel* had thus urged, betook himself to another way, that is very common among them; and, with great assurance told him, that he would certainly be *damned* if he became a *protestant*. But says *Daniel*, "*Who art thou that judgest another's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth: yea, he shall be bolden up: for God is able to make him stand. Rom. xiv. 4.*" Very well spoken for certain. Here is good plain

plain sense and honesty on the one hand ; and only groundless menace, and, in effect, giving up the cause, for want of argument, on the other. And who of all the Romish priests, with all their subtlety, could have invalidated the solid arguments upon which *Daniel* maintained his conversion, and the cause of Protestantism ?—Dr. *Balguy* may now reflect, if he pleases, upon the “ attempt of this poor *Daniel* to exercise his feeble understanding, in judging for himself ” in matters of religion ; and may also, if he shall think proper, call this piece of conduct, “ the caprice and folly of a disordered imagination.” But will he, at the same time, have the assurance to add, that *Daniel* was “ embarrassed by the specious and plausible arguments ” of the Romish priest ?

THIS little narrative may seem to be a sort of digression, but co-incides exactly with the main subject I am upon : to the pursuit of which I now proceed.]

3. “ WE cannot, if we would, conform our faith to the dictates of *another*, and believe just as he believes, and because he believes so : nor can it ever possibly be lawful, upon any account, to comply with, or agree to any thing in religion that is contrary to our judgement, and the inward per-

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suasion of our minds ; to profess for truth, what we believe to be a wrong faith, or false doctrine ; and to worship God after any other manner, than that which we conceive to be most agreeable to the divine will. In these matters we can neither give, nor can another usurp, any authority over our consciences ; nor can we submit them to any other ruler, but God and our own reason." Dr. *Ibbot*'s sermon before the Lord Mayor, Sept. 29, 1720.

4. " THE true knowledge of religion naturally leads men to a *rational* belief of it ; which should equally be the object of our zealous concern.—The great truths of the gospel are to be learnt from the *word of God*.—We ought not only to search and study the scriptures ourselves, but to stir up others to study them, with an unwearied zeal, a steady attention, and a hearty love of the *truth* :—And after proving and *examining* all things, we ought to hold fast that which we find to be good and true : neither blindly submitting our judgement to human authority, nor making our own opinion the standard of that of other men. In fine, we should earnestly contend for that faith, and form of sound doctrine, which was once for all delivered to the *first* Christians ; and endeavour to preserve it in its
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ancient purity and simplicity ; by distinguishing the genuine doctrine of Christ and his apostles, from the *traditional enlargements*, with which, in every age, it has been more or less clogged and blended. — “ Others have the same right to differ from Us, that we have to differ from Them.—If we treat others ill for professing what is the result of their diligent and honest inquiries into the will of God, we set up our own judgement as the standard of revealed truth ; and would oblige others to believe only such things as We determine and enjoin, without allowing them the liberty to *judge for themselves*. This is a most unrighteous encroachment upon the common privilege of mankind : For, to *inquire freely* into the truth of every thing that is proposed to us for our belief or our practice, is the natural and unalienable right of every man : it is the indispensable duty of every Christian : it is the characteristic of a true Protestant : it is the joy and triumph of every true *Briton*. It is a right that we can scarce over-value : and which we cannot give up, without renouncing the chief use of our reason ; which is the glory of our nature ; and was given us to be the guide of all our actions ; but more especially of our moral and religious conduct. Without

this *freedom of inquiry*, there can be no rational belief, no sincere practice of religion and virtue: but instead of a reasonable faith, credulity must prevail; and hypocrisy instead of devotion: religion would degenerate into superstition, and a Christian zeal be turned into bitter rage, and cruel bigotry.

“ LET us therefore beware of discouraging that *liberty of inquiry*, and of *private judgement*, which is the fundamental principle of our *reformation*, and the only firm support of all true religion. And though we cannot always avoid differing in our opinions, when we really *judge for ourselves*, let us however treat one another with justice, and candour, and a friendly respect. This fair usage is due to all persons, whatever their persuasions may be: and is far more apt to gain upon their minds, to reclaim them from error, or to reform their practice, than the more common methods, &c.” Dr. *Stevenson*’s serm. at the bishop of *Hereford*’s visitation, 1728.

5. “ PROVE ALL THINGS. All who have the use of their reason, are obliged by this precept, to examine and judge for themselves, upon the best information they can get, and in the proper use of the helps
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and advantages that are afforded them, that they may be fully persuaded in their own minds, and be able to give a reason unto others of the hope that is in them.

“ THIS precept is founded in the very nature and reason of things : for, unless every Christian be allowed to examine and judge for himself of what he is to believe and practise, there can be no such thing as true faith, nor consequently any religion. Now faith is a rational persuasion of the truth of things not seen ; which necessarily implies the exercise of our faculties, and the use of our reason ; nor is it possible for us, any other way, to arrive at a well-grounded faith, or at a rational and virtuous practice. And therefore, whatever principles of religion we embrace, if they are not the result of a free, honest, and impartial inquiry, and the matter of our deliberate choice, they must be looked upon as vain and groundless, and neither acceptable to God, nor truly satisfactory to our own minds.

“ THIS right of private judgement is inseparably connected with the supposition of our being *rational* ; and our obligation to the exercise of it, ariseth from the very frame and constitution of human nature.

“ CAN it be imagined, that the all-wise and beneficent author of our beings would have endowed all men with reason, understanding, and liberty, if he had not intended that all men should equally exercise them, and more especially so in the examination and choice of their religious principles?—Either therefore we must admit, that they are to judge for themselves, and to take up with such sentiments in religion as, upon due examination, shall appear to them to be right, and receive the approbation of their reason and conscience: or else we must suppose, that those noble powers and faculties, which do so eminently distinguish them from inferior beings, and on the right use whereof their supreme perfection and happiness depend, are, in great measure, insignificant and trifling, nay, altogether impertinent and useless, as to the chief and only valuable end of their existence.”

HENCE it appears that “ no man whatsoever, nor any body of men, can lawfully claim any authority over the consciences and judgements of other men, nor require an implicit submission to their sentiments of things, though in themselves true and worthy of acceptance: for in this respect all men are upon a level, and have an equal
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right to exercise their faculties, and determine their judgements by the evidence that appears to them.

“ UPON the whole, we must see with our own eyes, and perceive with our own understandings, and not take our religion upon trust, and regulate our faith and practice, either by the traditions of our ancestors, or by the mere dictates of our spiritual guides and instructors. And though in some cases there is a regard to be paid to antiquity, and what has been held and practised in the church for many successive generations, may challenge a candid and decent treatment; yet our assent and compliance must arise from the conviction of our minds, and be built upon more rational grounds, than either the venerable name of antiquity, or the authority and examples of great and worthy men.

“ THIS duty of exercising our right of private judgement, is strongly enforced by the holy scripture. Our blessed Saviour refers us to the sacred records for the credentials of his mission, and the truth of his doctrines. *Search the scriptures*, saith he: And, *Be not ye called Rabbi, neither be ye called Masters; for one is your master, even Christ.* And St. Paul exhorteth Christians to examine

mine the grounds of their religion, and to embrace it only upon conviction and choice. *I speak as unto wise men; judge ye what I say. — Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.* And St. John; *Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they be of God.*

“ WE also find a very high commendation bestowed upon the conduct of the *Bereans*, who received not even the doctrines of the inspired apostles, till they had first searched the scriptures, to see whether those things were so or not. And so the church of *Ephesus*, in the Revelation, is honoured with the approbation of Christ himself, for having *examined* the pretences of those who said they were apostles, but were not, and found them liars.

“ UPON this principle the *reformation* was at first founded, and doth still subsist: If we give it up, we shall sap the foundation, and the superstructure will soon fall to the ground.”

THE general inference and conclusion is this.

“ THIS right of private judgement *which has been asserted*, lays a foundation for mutual

tual charity and forbearance, notwithstanding our differences of opinion; provided they neither prejudice the cause of virtue, nor entrench upon the peace of society. In this imperfect state, it is not to be expected that all men should think exactly alike; nor doth it appear to have been ever intended by the wise author of our beings.— Since therefore there is no way of preventing all variety of sentiments in religion, without destroying the order of nature, and quite altering the present frame and constitution of things; we should be content to enjoy our own sentiments, without denying the same privilege to others, who as Men and Christians have an equal right to it.” Mr. *Myonnet*’s Sermon before the Lord Mayor at St. *Paul*’s, 5 Nov. 1736.

AFTER such good authorities produced in proof of the right of private judgement, one might now venture to ask Dr. *Balguy*, what he thinks of them, and whether he supposes himself able to demolish them, by arguments of greater force, of his own framing?—To the foregoing I could subjoin the authorities of *Chillingworth*, *Locke*, and several other writers of eminent abilities, whose arguments in the behalf of liberty could never yet be answered, to the satisfaction of competent judges, by any
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that opposed them. But I forbear for the present, and would ask the doctor next, whether he can have assurance enough to oppose his opinion on this argument, to the more liberal and united sentiments of his superiors in the church, to whose judgement in such matters, according to his own avowed principles, the greatest deference is due. The following prelates, of great name and merit, do each of them speak home to the purpose.

6. “ No one can have a *faith* of his own, who makes not use of his *own judgement*, in fixing in his mind what God calls upon him to believe, as necessary to a Christian.— Without this, he will be so far from contending for the faith once delivered to the saints, that he cannot know so much as what that faith is, nor have any faith at all to contend for.—In order to find out the faith once delivered, we must all endeavour, to the utmost of our power, to find out the true sense of those passages in which any thing is declared necessary to be believed in order to our salvation ; and to this purpose, must make use of our *own understandings*, and form the best judgement we ourselves can.”—Again : “ As it is absurd to suppose, that any man can be saved by the faith of another ; or by any belief, but
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what is truly his own : so there is no possible method of having a faith of his own, properly so called, without building it entirely upon what appears right to his own judgement, such as it is, after his best endeavours for information." Bp. Hoadly's disc. on *Jude* 3.

7. " As we enjoy the blessing of *liberty* in that perfection, which has been unknown to former ages, and is so still to most other nations ; let us be diligent in using it to the good purposes for which it is so liberally indulged us ; and render ours as much superior to those nations that are yet deprived of it, as most other countries are observed to have been in the like circumstances. Let us concur with this auspicious course of Providence, and each contribute our endeavours towards carrying on this progress (of religion,) by every serious, fair, and *free inquiry* ; free, not only from all outward violence and clamour, but also from all inward bitterness, wrath, and hatred : learning to bear with one another's mistakes, and labouring as well to reform the errors of our brethren in love, as to promote and confirm their knowledge of the truth ; *not for that*, in either case, *we have dominion over their faith ; but as being helpers of their joy.* And thus shall religion be

be at length suffered to partake the benefit of those *improvements*, which every thing beside enjoys." Bp. *Law's* considerations on the theory of religion (ed. 1765) p. 260, &c.

8. "WE ought to promote and to encourage the advancement of religious knowledge, and the only means by which it can be advanced, *freedom of inquiry*.—Christianity has always flourished or decayed together with learning and liberty : it will ever stand or fall with them. It is therefore of the utmost importance to the cause of true religion, that it be submitted to an open and impartial *examination* ; that every *disquisition* concerning it be allowed its free course ; that even the malice of its enemies should have its full scope, and try it's utmost strength of argument against it.—What has been the consequence of all that licentious contradiction, with which the gospel has been received in these our times, and in this nation ? Has it not given birth to such irrefragable apologies and convincing illustrations of our most holy religion, as no other age or nation ever produced ?—Let no one lightly entertain suspicions of any serious proposal for the advancement of religious knowledge ; nor out of unreasonable prejudice endeavour to obstruct
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any *inquiry* that professes to aim at the farther illustration of the great scheme of the gospel in general, or the removal of error in any part, in faith, in doctrine, in practice, or in worship. An opinion is not therefore false because it contradicts received notions : but whether true or false, let it be submitted to a *fair examination* : truth must in the end be a gainer by it, and appear with the greater evidence. Where *freedom of inquiry* is maintained and exercised under the direction of the sincere *word of God*, falsehood may perhaps triumph for a day, but to-morrow truth will certainly prevail, and every succeeding day will confirm her superiority.—By the blessing of God upon the free exercise of *reason* and *private judgement*, the labours of the learned have been greatly successful in promoting religious knowledge.” Dr. *Lowth's* visitation-sermon at *Durham*, 1758. And this right reverend and worthy personage speaks to the same purpose (in favour of the liberty of private judgement) in the assize-sermon which he preached there. “ Our religious establishment, saith his lordship, is founded on the right of *private judgement* ; and freely allows to others, that liberty which it hath vindicated to itself.”

9. Another learned prelate, who studied
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this subject with great attention, and was sufficiently cautious not to allow too much scope to religious liberty, and the exercise of private judgement, freely and readily makes the following concessions in their favour, which have done him honour, and rendered his tracts more valuable, *viz.* “ Every man must have a right to judge finally for himself in all matters of religion.”—“ All Christians should duly exercise, and be finally determined by, their own judgement, respectively, as to all matters of faith and practice in religion.”—“ From the express and repeated declarations of the Scriptures of the New Testament, it is evident, that God intended to give to every one a right to judge, at all times ultimately for himself, in all matters of religion.” Bp. *Ellis's* tracts on liberty, 1767. p. 17, 19, 35.

ALL these weighty authorities in support of the right of private judgement, may now seem abundantly sufficient to bear down the objections of Dr. *B.* who hath endeavoured to lessen our esteem for this valuable privilege, in order thereby to give the greater solidity to his own scheme.

THERE is however one masterly (tho' anonymous) author remaining, who hath lately

lately written with great spirit and clearness as well as strength of argument, on this subject, and seems to have given the concluding stroke to all that can well be said upon it. I cannot therefore dismiss this collection of authorities, to my satisfaction, without subjoining to them the following remarks of this able and engaging writer.

10. “ THE religion of Jesus utterly disclaims all dominion over the faith and conscience of men. We are expressly forbidden by our Lord himself, to acknowledge any authority in points of faith and religion besides his : and are expressly told that in things of this nature we are all brethren, having an equal power and authority over each other, i. e. in truth, none at all : *One is our master, even Christ.*

“ IN our inquiring after truth, we should carefully lay aside all prejudice and prepossession, in favour of any theological notions or opinions that we may have hastily taken up, through the dint of custom and education, or through an implicit and blind submission to the canons and injunctions of men.

“ IT is an idle and imaginary thing to suppose that infallibility should be lodged in

one man, or be the peculiar distinguishing privilege of any one church. I must after all *judge for myself*; since no man in matters of religion and conscience has any more right to judge and determine for me in this world, than he has to sit in judgement upon me hereafter.—If I am answerable for the use and exercise of my understanding, why should I resign it to another? Or how, or with what face, can any sober and reasonable person insist upon it?—My right of thinking and judging for myself, will disturb no man's peace, whilst I allow him as freely to exercise the same right.

“ Many have weakly contended for the necessity of a perfect uniformity and agreement in articles of faith, and urged their own creeds and canons as the only standards of truth and orthodoxy, when it is too plain and evident to be denied that such an exact and perfect uniformity is not to be expected, nor is it any where to be found, not even in the church of *Rome* herself, notwithstanding all her loud boasts of infallibility.—If we are Protestants upon principle, why should we take any doctrines for granted, upon the bare assertion, the credit or authority of others, or because we have received them from our ancestors? Or what good reason can be assigned why we
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should not reject the mistakes of our forefathers, as they rejected those of the church of *Rome*?——The cause in which we are all professedly embarked as protestants, seems to rest entirely upon the exercise of private judgement, and the right which every man has to the free use of the holy *scriptures*; and I am persuaded, that a general and strict adherence to this truly protestant principle, had we room to hope for it, would tend more than any thing else, to sap the foundations, and shake the whole system of popery.——And how indeed can we expect that farther reformation, which is by many so much desired and wished for, unless, as protestants, we uniformly pursue, and steadily act upon the same principle? Upon this principle our separation from the church of *Rome* is fully justified, and [upon this] we might hope to see Christian liberty and truth, and real religion, gain yet more ground. *Essay on the right of private judgement, prefixed to a Work entitled, The True Doctrine of the New Testament concerning Jesus Christ considered*, p. 14, 9, 47, 25, 30, 33, 34.

THE ingenious author of this essay pleads the cause of this invaluable right so well, and argues in its favour upon such clear and solid principles, that I believe every candid and benevolent reader, and friend to

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liberty,

liberty, will be well pleased if I present him with a farther view of the writer's thoughts on this head.

• “ No man can plead an exclusive privilege, or have any better plea than another, for insisting upon a right to judge and determine for another; but every one has an indisputable right to judge for himself: every honest and conscientious man will do it; every true protestant will look upon the *scripture* as his safest and surest guide in doing it; and every sincere lover of truth, every meek and humble Christian, may hope for, and reckon upon such assistance of the Spirit of God, as will enable him by this rule to judge and determine for himself, in all controversies of religion, as far as is needful, or necessary, in order to his acceptance with God, and his final happiness. One private Christian hath certainly as good authority and right to search the scriptures, and judge of truth and falsehood, as another. If he has a capacity for it, as is here supposed, he certainly has a right to do it, a right that no man can justly deprive him of. And, for any church to deny or refuse him this just and rightful claim, is what directly tends to destroy all religion and virtue. For what is religion or faith without understanding? Or what is virtue

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or morality without reason, liberty, and freedom of choice?—

“ FOR any one to set up himself as an *authorised interpreter* of scripture, so as to pass his own interpretations for laws, and demand from others an implicit faith and blind submission, is going greater lengths than what our Saviour himself, or his apostles after him, ever did, or gave any the least countenance for doing.—If the scriptures, which were indited by an infallible spirit, are a more sure rule than any interpretations of fallible men, as they certainly are, why must I *subscribe* to the words *which man's wisdom teacheth*, and not acquiesce in the words *which the holy gospel teacheth*? Or why should any force be put upon the understanding, any violence offered to the conscience of Men, who cannot believe as they please, and who dare not lie in professing to believe what they do not? Sure I am, that no other methods but those of argument, reason, and evidence, can possibly be of any effect in the disputable and less necessary points of religion.—

“ LET those whom it more immediately concerns seriously reflect, whether they can fairly support and vindicate any such measures, as can only tend to blind and shackle

the human understanding, and put a stop to that freedom of sentiment and inquiry, which is the *natural right* of every man, in a peculiar sense the birth-right and glory of every true *protestant*, who, if he rightly understands himself, and his own principles, will never be hurried away with the authority of great names, whether ancient or modern, nor biased by education, custom, or interest, as is too much the manner and way of the world." p. 24, 25, 26, 18, 19.

I cannot better close up these notes, asserting the right of private judgement, than by recommending the fine observations following, whereby the author would engage Christians to mutual forbearance, and unity of spirit, in the midst of their different sentiments about religion, or any external modes and circumstances annexed to it. To *forbear one another in love*, is an apostolical injunction; and the constant exercise of it, amongst all denominations, would tend very much to the peace and happiness of the Christian world.

" SOME differences in principle, opinion, and sentiment, will always subsist in all communities. Summaries of faith are no sure guard against them. Nor is it at all to be wondered at, that men should form a
different

different opinion and judgement, as in other things, so in their interpretation and sense of the sacred writings. Nay, the inspired writers themselves do every where take it for granted, that Christians will differ as to their *judgement* in many things. They may *think* differently, and yet *walk* by the *same rule* : or they may, notwithstanding some difference in *opinion* or persuasion, be at *unity* with one another, having the *same love*, being of *one accord*, of *one mind*. Their *religion* will teach them humanity, forbearance, and good-nature one towards another. True piety and charity will always perfectly harmonize and unite. And the great principles of Christianity, rightly understood, will strengthen and perfect that union which ought to subsist in every religious and civil society. We are therefore exhorted as Christians, to keep, — not an unity of *opinion* in the bond of *ignorance*, nor an unity of *profession* in the bond of *hypocrisy*, but an unity of *spirit* in the bond of *peace*. And herein it is [herein alone] that true *Christian unity* does consist : not so much in uniformity of opinion, as in unanimity of affection, in love and peace, in mutual charity and good-will, and in all kind and friendly offices, as it becometh brethren in Christ Jesus ; who all hold the same head, and acknowledge one and the same Lord,

and who are (as to every thing material or necessary,) of the same mind and judgement [and of the same universal church of Christ,] however denominated or distinguished in other respects." p. 15, 16.—

AGAIN, "A diversity of opinions there is, and always will be, among Christians, even protestants of every denomination, and those of the very same religious society. So long as men are of one mind in the greatest articles (such as the belief of a God, his providence, a future state, a judgement to come, the divine authority of the scriptures, the necessity of a godly life, and its acceptableness with God to salvation, through Jesus Christ,) there is no need of being of one mind, as to other matters. Nay, so long as good men agree to differ, and carry on their inquiries and debates with a Christian temper and spirit, this is so far from being injurious to the peace of the community, that the church and the world may be greatly edified and improved by it; light and knowledge will increase, and truth be the more likely to spread and prevail." *ibid.* p. 30, 31.

WHAT the essayist notes above concerning uniformity of opinion, and the little avail of it in comparison of the exercise of the Christian temper, is truly amiable, and
may

may well be applied to all other instances of ecclesiastical uniformity. I have the pleasure to observe, that the learned Dr. *Moore* expresses the same sentiments, with regard to these supposed marks of orthodoxy and conformity. "A mutual agreement of bearing with one another's dissents in the *non-fundamentals* of religion, is really a greater ornament of Christianity, than the most exact *uniformity* imaginable; it being an eminent act or exercise of Christian *charity*, (the flower of all Christian graces,) and the best way, I think, at the long run, to make the *church* as *uniform*, as can justly be desired." *Preface to m. of godlin.* p. 17.

N° IV.

Some specimens of the learning and other qualifications of our principal reformers, for drawing up articles of theology, to be the standard of the doctrines of the church of England.

O U R reformers, to their just praise be it spoken, were excellent men, and their names ought for ever to be had in honourable remembrance by all *British* protestants. To them, under God, we owe one of the greatest of blessings, the recovering of our Christian liberty from the vassalage of popery, and arbitrary sway over our reason and our consciences, and also, in many cases, over our lives and fortunes. Our good, our great and glorious deliverers, passed through innumerable, and almost insuperable difficulties, in order to regain to us these invaluable benefits, and at last, on that account, gave up their lives, and all that was dear to them in this world, as a sacrifice in
the

the cause of truth ; expiring in the greatest tortures that their inhuman adversaries could invent, to put a stop to their farther progress in reforming.

IT is evident from history, that they would have gone much farther than they did in the reformation they intended, if the times had been more favourable. But thanks be to almighty God, that they were permitted and enabled to do so much as they have done for us. They laid the foundation, leaving the superstructure to be carried on and compleated by their successors.

ONE other, and no small disadvantage which they unhappily laboured under, and which from their time to this, has been matter of just regret to true friends to divine revelation, was their defect of knowledge in sacred matters, above all, in the true sense of Scripture. Critical learning therein was at that time at a low ebb : nor could it well be otherwise, considering the abyss of ignorance and superstition in which they had been long immersed, and out of which they were then gradually emerging. I have numerous instances in my view, to prove the truth of this assertion ; but for the present, I pass them over, contenting myself,
as

as I hope I shall my readers, with a few specimens.

In the first edition of our *English* liturgy, 1548, they retained the old *exorcising* form in the office of baptizing infants. Ridiculous enough for certain, as it may now appear to Us, but it did not, it seems, appear so to Them, in those less enlightened days. Here it follows.

“ *Then let the priest, looking upon the children, say, I command thee, unclean spirit* ¹⁶, *in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, that thou come out and depart from these infants, whom our Lord Jesus Christ hath vouchsafed to call to his holy baptism, to be made members of his body, and of his holy congregation. Therefore, thou cursed spirit, remember thy sentence, remember thy judgement, remember the day to be at hand, wherein thou shalt burn in fire everlasting, prepared for thee and thy angels. And presume not hereafter to exercise thy tyranny towards these infants* *, *whom Christ hath bought*
with

* As to the origin of this custom of exorcising, it seems to have been applied at first to *adults* only, not to infants.

“ In the ancient ages of the church, says Mr. *Wheatly*, a custom obtained to cast the devil out of the person baptized,

with his precious blood, and by his holy baptism calleth to be of his flock."

SOME other very exceptionable passages may be seen here and there in our old common-prayer books, particularly the first, which nevertheless some modern protestants (Dr. *Hickes*, if I remember right, for one) have not scrupled to extol as the best and most primitive form of public service we ever had in our language.

tized, who was supposed to have taken possession of the catechumen in his unregenerate state." How then came this solemn farce to be acted in the case of young *infants*? And is the latter part of the 72d canon (which is still in force) now put in practice?—The same author takes notice of another absurdity, in which our reformers were unhappily involved at that time; having a notion, a strange one it was, that in some cases baptism must at all events be performed, though in private, though in the greatest hurry, and many times by any layman or woman present, rather than that the infant should die unbaptized, or, in the phrase of an unbeliever, be left in the *paws of the roaring lion*. This notion and practice, Mr. *Wheatly* tells us, was founded upon an error which our reformers had imbibed in the Romish church, concerning the impossibility of salvation without the sacrament of baptism: which therefore, being in their opinions so absolutely necessary, they chose should be administered by any body that was present, in cases of extremity, rather than any should die without it. But afterwards they came to have clearer notions of the sacraments, and perceived how absurd it was to confine the mercies of God to outward means. And yet even still we find the rubric speaking of *great cause and necessity, of need compelling, &c.*

IF we would next form our judgement of the abilities of our reformers to frame for us a system of doctrines which should remain a perpetual standard of belief and profession in the *English* church, and by which all our clergy, in all future ages, should be summarily concluded, we shall, I suppose, see just reason to wish, that they had been more equal than they appear to be, to so weighty an undertaking. Those who are well acquainted with their writings, will see, in a variety of instances, evident marks of their insufficiency for such a task, and be fully convinced of the truth of that observation of a learned and worthy doctor of our church, that they were but *bad interpreters of the scriptures*.

ARCHBISHOP *Cranmer*, it is well known, had the principal hand as a divine, in conducting the great work of our reformation. In the reign of King *Edward VI.* (1548) he published a *catechism*, or *short instruction into Christian religion*, prefixing to it a dedication to his Majesty. The following extracts from that treatise, will afford matter of speculation to the curious, and at the same time of conviction to the judicious, that one of the most learned and best men in *England* was defective in a branch of

of literature that most concerned him, and was far short of those attainments in biblical knowledge, and the genuine sense of Scripture, of which the present age is so happily possessed.—Judge from what you read under the following heads.

I. *Original Sin.*

“ IN the ninth and tenth commandments you shall learn, that evil lusts and appetites which come unto us from our first father *Adam* be sins, and that no man or woman, no not infants in their mother's womb, do live without such lusts and appetites.—These appetites and desires we may perceive to be even in infants which lie in their cradle. For when such young babes do not lie softly, or be grieved with thirst, hunger or cold, they cry unpatiently. Likewise when we shew them any pleasant thing to their eyes, and suddenly again take it from them, we see them weep. And these be plain and evident tokens, that infants newly born be given to their own wills and appetites, and are sinners, for as much as they transgress this commandment, *Thou shalt not desire*.—Let not the sayings of certain unlearned persons move you, which affirm that infants and such as be under the years of discretion, are pure, innocent

innocent and clean without sin. For this opinion is not true, nor agreeable to holy Scripture: and they that say so, deceive both themselves and other. For infants are baptized for this purpose, that they by the same may enjoy remission of their sins. And in case they needed not forgiveness of their offences, then they had no need to be christened. But there be few that understandeth this doctrine. For man's reason cannot attain to it, neither can it comprehend how infants should be sinners by the reason of lusts and desires, called concupiscence, in the which they be conceived and born; but they that lean to their natural wit, judgeth young babes to be innocent and void of sin, because they commit no outward offence, or actual sin. But we in this case must not judge after our *reason*, but according to the word of God, which evidently declareth unto us, that concupiscence is sin.—And to know this thing, is a point of high wisdom, to the which every man doth not attain. For the apostle *Paul* doth confess, that he had not known this sin, if the law had not given him warning of it *. For he saith, I had not

* Can we suppose that the worthy author understood St. *Paul* here in his true sense? Or are we obliged to adopt and adhere to the author's interpretation?

known concupiscence, if the law had not said, Thou shalt not desire or lust. Wherefore lock up this lesson in the coffer of your memories, by the which you shall learn truly to fear God."

" OUR first parents *Adam* and *Eve*, [being] poisoned with the venom of the serpent—were replenished with concupiscence, and evil desires, lusts and appetites. And these be the roots of original sin, out of the which all other sins do spring and grow. So *Adam* and *Eve* had a very great fall, that fell from God's benediction, favour and love, into God's curse, anger and displeasure ; that fell from original justice into original sin, by the which fall, all the strength and powers both of their bodies and souls were sore decayed and corrupted. And as our first parents *Adam* and *Eve* were infected and corrupted, even so be we, that be their children. For as we see by daily experience, that commonly gouty parents begetteth gouty children ; and if the father and the mother be infected with the leprosie, we see commonly that the children born between them have the self-same disease : So likewise, as our first parents *Adam* and *Eve* did not put their trust in God, no more do they, that be carnally born of them. And as they loved not God, so
their

their children love him not : And as they followed their own concupiscence, lusts and appetites, and not the will of God, even so do all their issue. So that all their posterity upon earth be sinners, even in their mothers wombs.—And for this cause the Scripture doth say, that all we are conceived and born in sin. (*Psal.* 51.) And St. *Paul* saith (*Eph.* 2.) that by nature we be the children of God's wrath. So that we all should everlastingly be damned, if Christ by his death had not redeemed us.”—

“ THE well and head out of the which all the evils in this miserable world do spring, is original sin ; in the which we were conceived and born in our mothers wombs, whereby man's *reason* is so blinded, that of himself he cannot know God, nor his word. And man's *will* also by this sin is so poisoned, that he doth not obey the will of God, nor keep his commandments ;—nay, we feel in ourselves, that even from our tender age, and in our cradles also, we be clean contrary-minded to the will of God.”

[In short, men in those times had such dreadful notions of *original sin*, that, as Bishop *Latimer* tells us, some thought it to
be

be the *sin against the Holy Ghost*. And accordingly we may think it well for us in these times (and a happy escape it was) that the compilers of the articles did not begin their *ninth* in some such words as these: *Original, or birth-sin* (which is the sin against the Holy Ghost) *standeth not, &c.*]

II. *Baptism.*

“THESE be the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, spoken to his disciples: *Go into the whole world, and teache all nations, and baptize them, in the name of the Father, and the Sonne, and the Holy Ghost*. By these words our Lord Jesus Christ did institute baptism, whereby we be born again to the kingdom of God.”—“By baptism we be born again to a new and heavenly life, and be received into God’s church and congregation, which is the foundation and pillar of the truth.—The cause of this our second birth, is the sinfulness and filthiness of our first birth. For by our first nativity (when we were born of our fathers and mothers) all we were born in sin; and when we issued out of our mothers womb, we were laden with sin and God’s anger. For as *Adam* did sin, and by sin was so corrupted both in his body and soul, that by his own power or strength he was not

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able

able to do any good thing, even so all the children and offspring of *Adam* be born sinners, so that they cannot be justified by themselves, or by their own strength, but are inclined and bent to sin at all times ; (*Eph. 2.*) But when we be born again by baptism, then our sins be forgiven us, and the Holy Ghost is given us, which doth make us also holy.—By baptism we be made the children of God, and receive the Holy Ghost, which doth help us to withstand all evil, and to do that is good.—”

“ BAPTISM is not water alone, and nothing else besides, but it is the water of God, and hath his (its) strength by the word of God, and is a seal of God’s promise. Wherefore it doth work in us all those things, whereunto God hath ordained it. For our Lord Jesus Christ saith, Go and baptize all nations, &c. This God commanded his disciples to do. Wherefore by the virtue of this commandment, which came from Heaven, even from the bosom of God, baptism doth work in us, as the work of God. For when we be baptized in the name of God, that is as much as to say, as God himself should baptize us, Wherefore we ought not to have an eye only to the water, but to God rather, which did ordain the baptism of water,
and

and commanded it to be done in his name. For he is Almighty, and able to work in us by baptism, forgiveness of our sins, and all those wonderful effects and operations, for the which he hath ordained the same.

“THEREFORE consider the great treasures and benefits, whereof God maketh us partakers, when we are baptised, which be these.

“THE *first* is, that in baptism, our sins be forgiven us; as St. *Peter* witnesseth, saying; Let every one of you be baptized for the forgiveness of his sins. The *second* is, that the Holy Ghost is given us, the which doth spread abroad the love of God in our heart, whereby we may keep God's commandments, according to the saying of St. *Peter* (*Actuum* 2.) Let every one of you be baptised in the name of Christ, and then you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. The *third* is, that by baptism the whole righteousness of Christ is given unto us, that we may claim the same as our own. For so St. *Paul* teacheth, saying, As many of ye as are baptized in Christ, have put upon you Christ. [A Christian man hath the certain word of God, whereupon he may ground his conscience that he is made a Christian man, and is one of Christ's

members, which he is assured of by baptism. For he that is baptized, may assuredly say thus: " I am not now in this wavering opinion, that I only suppose myself
 " to be a Christian man, but I am in a
 " sure belief, that I am made a Christian
 " man. For I know for a surety that I am
 " baptized; and I am sure also, that baptism was ordained of God, and that he
 " which baptized me, did it by God's
 " commission and commandment. And
 " the Holy Ghost doth witness, that he
 " which is baptized, hath put upon him
 " Christ. Wherefore the Holy Ghost in
 " my baptism assureth me, that I am a
 " Christian man." And this is a true and sincere faith, which is able to stand against the gates of hell, for as much as it hath for it the evidence of God's word, and leaneth not to any man's saying or opinion.]

—*Fourthly*, by baptism we die with Christ, and are buried (as it were) in his blood and death, that we should suffer afflictions and death as Christ himself hath suffered. And as that man which is baptized, doth promise to God that he will die with Christ, that he may be dead to sin, and to the old *Adam*; so on the other part, God doth promise again to him, that he shall be partaker of Christ's death and passion. [—God doth forgive us our sins by faith, but by afflict-

afflictions and death he doth take them clean away, as *St. Peter* witnesseth, saying; He that suffereth, or is afflicted in the flesh, doth cease from sin. And *St. Paul* sayeth, He that is dead is justified, or delivered from sin. These be the promises which we make when we are baptized.]

“By this which I have spoken, I trust you understand, wherefore baptism is called the bath of regeneration, and how in baptism we be born again, and be made new creatures.—Before we were baptized, it is evident that we were sinners; and he that is a sinner, can have no peace nor quietness of conscience before he come to Christ; so much he feareth God's wrath and everlasting damnation. But after that our sins, in baptism be forgiven us, and we believe the promise of God, and so by our faith be justified, then our consciences be quieted, and we be glad and merry, trusting assuredly, that God is no more angry with us for our former offences, and that we shall not be damned for the same. And this is a marvellous alteration, and renewing of the inward man; the which could be wrought by the power of no creature, but by God alone.

“Also before we were baptized, we were

slaves and bondmen to sin, so that we neither could do that good which we would have done, nor could keep us from that evil which we would not have done, as *St. Paul* complaineth of himself, *Rom. 7.* * But when by baptism the Holy Ghost was given us, the which did spread abroad the love of God in our hearts, and did also deliver us from the bondage and tyranny of sin, and gave us new strength and power to wrestle against sin, and manfully to withstand our ghostly enemy the Devil, then, after a certain manner, we were able to fulfil God's commandments. And this is a great change and renewing of the inward man.—Know for a surety, and stedfastly believe, that no child of the *Jews* or *Turks*, which is not baptized, hath the Holy Ghost, neither that any such can understand the word of God, neither that any such is holy or righteous before God."

III. *Imputed Righteousness.*

"HE that is a sinner and not baptized,

* Here is a strong instance, amongst many others, of the injudicious and inconsistent manner of interpreting the Scripture in those times. The learned of the present age, with much better reason, understand the matter otherwise. See *Dr. Whitby's* note on the 25th verse of this chapter.

although

although he had the Holy Ghost to this effect, (*viz*) to help him to fight against sin, yet oftentimes he is overcome, and falleth to sin,—and he is ever in peril lest he be overcome of sin :—but when in baptism the righteousness of Christ is given and imputed to him, then he is delivered from all those perils. For he knoweth for a surety, that he hath put upon him Christ, and that his weakness and imperfection is covered and hid with the perfect righteousness and holiness of Christ. Wherefore after baptism he doth not trust in his own righteousness, but in Christ only. And he is no more pensive or doubtful, considering his own weakness, but he is joyful, because he considereth that he is made partaker of Christ's righteousness.—Seeing that Christ was the most innocent lamb, that never was blotted with any spot of sin, and yet he suffered for us as a sinner, it is evident hereby, that he died not for himself, but took upon him our sins, and bore for us the burden which we should have borne.—Hereby we may evidently perceive, that the great wrath and indignation of God to us hath an end, and that by our lively faith in Christ, our sins be forgiven us, and that we be reconciled into the favour of God, made holy and righteous. For then God doth no more impute

unto us our former sins, but he doth impute and give unto us the justice and righteousness of his son Jesus Christ, which suffered for us.—

“God causeth his gospel to be preached unto us,—he openeth our hearts, and giveth us faith to believe his gospel. And to them that believe his gospel he giveth the Holy Ghost, which doth govern us, and lead us unto all truth.—By faith we be justified before God; for faith maketh us partakers of the justice of Christ, and planteth us in Christ; and he that by true faith do receive the promise of grace, to him God giveth the Holy Ghost, by whom charity is spread abroad in our hearts, which performeth all the commandments. Therefore he that believeth in Christ, and truly believeth the gospel, he is just and holy before God, by the justice of Christ, which is imputed and given unto him, as *St. Paul* saith, *Rom. 3.*”

It may be noted here, that imputed righteousness is set by this author in opposition to the strict demands of the *law*, but not in *St. Paul's* sense of either, which, since this worthy man's time, has been made abundantly evident by persons of the greatest accuracy and discernment. The archbishop
seems

seems to have understood the apostle as speaking only of the *moral law*, particularly, as he expressly asserts, of the ten commandments, which, saith he, “are an excellent godly and heavenly doctrine, but by them we do only learn what God requireth of us, and so be brought to the knowledge of our sin. For this is the office of the *law*, to teach us our offences, and to set before our eyes the great fear of God, and the indignation which we have deserved by breaking his commandments;”—with other positions of this kind, and inferences properly drawn from them; all honestly meant, but in respect of the argument, and the term *law*, not exhibiting the *true sense* and design of scripture.

As to the tenet of *imputed righteousness*, it made a great noise in the world in former times, and is now again insisted upon anew by some zealous revivers of the Calvinian doctrines, who exactly tread in the steps of the famous Dr. *Owen* and his followers. But the peculiar notions on this head, owing to a wrong interpretation of scripture, were thoroughly refuted long ago in a valuable treatise, intitled, *A discourse concerning the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us, and our sins to him, &c.* Written by Mr. *Hotchkiss*, a learned clergyman in *Wilts*: which

all

all the systematical artifices in the world will never be able to overthrow.

IV. *As to the Three Sacraments.*

“OUR lord Jesus Christ hath instituted and annexed to the gospel, *three* sacraments, or holy seals of his covenant and league made with us. And by these three, God’s ministers do work with us in the name and place of God (yea God himself worketh with us) to confirm us in our faith, and to asserten us that we are the lively members of God’s true church, and the chosen people of God to whom the gospel is sent; and that all those things belong to us, whereof the promises of the gospel make mention. “The first of these sacraments is *baptism*,” which hath been already treated upon. “The second is *absolution*,” of which under the next head. “And the third is the *communion*,” or the Lord’s-supper; of which in due place hereafter.

V. *Absolution.*

“By absolution, or the authority of the keys, we be absolved from such sins as we be fallen into after our baptism. — When we fall again to great sins after that we are once baptized, we ought not to neglect it,
nor

nor by walking in a certain rechelesnes, think that our sins be forgiven us only because God is merciful; but in the fight between our conscience (on the one hand) and the devil (on the other, suggesting such a notion,) our great trust and comfort is, the sure word and work of God, which may ascertain us that our sins are forgiven, that is to say, when we obtain forgiveness of our sins by sure trust in God's mercy, and as time serveth to seek for absolution of the ministers of the church, to whom Christ hath delivered the keys.—Now when a man, after baptism, hath grievously sinned, and doubteth in his conscience whether he be in the favour of God or no (as oftentimes it happeneth) then it is hard for him to trust to his own imaginations, thinking on this fashion, *‘ I know I have sinned, but yet I am in this opinion, that God is not so cruel a revenger, but that he hath forgiven.’* For such an opinion, without God's word, is not a true faith, nor is able to stand in the dangerous skirmishes of temptation: but true faith must ever be stayed upon the certain word and work of God. Now God doth not speak to us with a voice sounding out of heaven; but he hath given the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and the authority to forgive sin, to the ministers of the church. Wherefore let him that is a
sinner

sinner go to one of them, let him know ledge and confess his sin, and pray him that according to God's commandment, he will give him absolution, and comfort him with the word of grace, and forgiveness of his sins,

“ AND when the minister doth so, then I ought stedfastly to believe, that my sins are truly forgiven me in heaven. And such a faith is able to stand strong in all skirmishes and assaults of our mortal enemy the devil, forasmuch as it is builded upon a rock, that is to say, upon the certen word of God. For he that is absolved, knoweth for a surety, that his sins be forgiven him by the minister. And he knoweth assuredly also, that the minister hath authority from God himself so to do. And thirdly, he knoweth that God hath made this promise to his ministers, and said to them, To whom ye forgive sins upon earth, to him also they shall be forgiven in heaven. Wherefore give good ear to this doctrine, and when your sins do make you afraid and sad, then seek and desire absolution and forgiveness of your sins, of the ministers, which have received a commission and commandment from Christ himself to forgive men their sins, and then your consciences shall have peace, tranquillity and quietness. But he that doth not obey this counsel, but being
either

either blind or proud, doth despise the same, he shall not find forgiveness of his sins, neither in his own good works, nor yet in painful chastisements of his body, or any other thing whereto God hath not promised remission of sins. Wherefore despise not absolution, for it is the commandment and ordinance of God, and the Holy Spirit of God is present, and causeth these things to take effect in us, and to work our salvation: ——— inasmuch that whatsoever God's ministers do to us by God's commandment, are as much available, as if God himself should do the same. For whether the ministers do excommunicate open malefactors, and unrepentant persons, or do give absolution to those which be truly repentant for their sins, and amend their lives, these acts of the ministers have as great power and authority, and be confirmed and ratified in heaven, as though our lord Jesus Christ himself had done the same. Wherefore,—when you be asked, how understand you the words before rehearsed, [*whose sins ye shall forgive in earth, &c.*] ye shall answer, “I do believe, that whatsoever the ministers of Christ do to us by
 “ God's commandment, either in excom-
 “ municating open and unrepentant sin-
 “ ners, or in absolving repentant persons,
 “ all their acts be of as great authority,
 “ and as surely confirmed in heaven, as if
 “ Christ

“ Christ should speak the words out of
“ heaven.” ¹⁷

“ So you have the beginning and foundation of the ministers of God’s word, and of the authority of the keys, as our lord Jesus Christ did first ordain and institute the same. The which our saviour Christ did institute and appoint for this purpose, that our consciences might thereby be comforted, and assured of the forgiveness of sins, and to have the inestimable treasures of the gospel, as often as we have need thereof; that we thereby being made strong in our faith, might so continue to the end of our life.”

VI. *Imposition of hands; Ordination;
Ministerial authority, &c.*

“ THE words of Christ be these (*John* 20 :) Our lord Jesus breathed on his apostles, and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them, and whose sins you reserve, they are reserved.——Our saviour Christ did breathe into his disciples, and gave them the Holy Ghost. Where the Holy Ghost is, there he so worketh, that he causeth us to do those things which Christ hath commanded: and when that is not done, then the Holy Ghost

is not there.—After Christ's ascension, the apostles gave authority to other godly and holy men, to minister God's word. — Where they found godly men, and meet to preach God's word, they laid their hands upon them, and gave them the Holy Ghost, as they themselves received of Christ the same Holy Ghost, to execute this office. And they that were so ordained, were indeed, and also were called, the ministers of God, as the apostles themselves were. And so the ministration of God's word (which our lord Jesus Christ himself did first institute) was derived from the apostles unto other after them, by imposition of hands, and giving the Holy Ghost, from the apostles time to our days. And this was the consecration, orders and unction of the apostles, whereby they, at the beginning, made bishops and priests, and this shall continue in the church even to the world's end *.

“ WHEREFORE you shall give due reverence and honour to the ministers of the church, and shall not meanly or lightly esteem them in the execution of their office,

* Then follows this remark ; “ And whatsoever rite or ceremony hath been added more than this, cometh of man's ordinance and policy, and is not commanded by God's word.”

but you shall take them for God's ministers, and the messengers of our lord Jesus Christ. For Christ himself saith in the gospel, He that heareth You, heareth Me, and he that despiseth You, despiseth Me. Wherefore you shall stedfastly believe all those things which ministers shall speak unto you from the mouth, and by the commandment of our lord Jesus Christ. And whatsoever they do to you, as when they baptize you, when they give you absolution, and distribute to you the body and blood of our lord Jesus Christ, these you shall so esteem as if Christ himself, in his own person, did speak and minister unto you.—All things which the ministers of the church do say or do to us, ought to be directed to this end, that they may loose us, and declare unto us the forgiveness of our sins, when we truly repent, and believe in Christ. But when we do not repent us of our sin, and forsake the same, or do not believe the gospel, then they ought to bind or reserve sin, and to declare unto us, that if we still continue in sin, we shall be damned for ever. And when the ministers do thus execute their commission, then they obey God, and whose sins soever they forgive in earth, their sins be forgiven in heaven also. And contrariwise, whomsoever they bind in earth, their sins be bound also in heaven ;” [as was declared

clared under the article of *absolution*.] “ But if the ministers would enterprize to do contrary to their commission, that is to say, to forgive sins to unrepentant sinners and unbelievers, or to bind their sins and deny them absolution that be repentant, and trust in the mercy of God, then they should not do well, nor their act should be of any force ¹⁸.

“ BUT when the ministers do truly execute their office, you ought to take great comfort, and to confirm your faith thereby, that you may stedfastly believe, and in all temptations answer your adversary the devil after this manner;

“ God hath sent to me one of his ministers : He, in the name and place of God, hath declared to me the forgiveness of my sins, and hath baptized me in the assurance of the same. Wherefore I doubt not but that my sins be forgiven, and that I am made the son and heir of God.”

VII. *Satisfaction of Christ.*

“ IT was requisite that Christ, God and man, should be conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of a pure virgin. For if Christ
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should redeem us, and satisfy for our sins, then must he needs be holy and without sin. For if he had been guilty and a sinner, then could he not have holpen his own self, but he must needs have had another saviour and redeemer for him, as well as we have for us. For whatsoever he had done or suffered, should have been worthily for his own offences, and yet could he not have satisfied for other. Wherefore it was necessary, if he should satisfy for us, that his nativity should be pure without sin, and not corrupt as our's is. That our corrupt and damnable nativity might be purified and made holy, by the holy and pure nativity of Christ; therefore Christ, being pure and clean from all sin, was able to redeem sinners and satisfy for them. Now forasmuch as the justice of God did require that Christ should suffer and make satisfaction for us, and do all things that we were bound to do, it was necessary that he should be made man. For if he had not been a very natural man, he could not have done for us all those things which we were bound to do. And again, if he had not been very God, he could not have been pure and clean from all sin, and so have made a true and perfect satisfaction * for our sins. For no man can perfectly

* Note: The word *satisfaction* never occurs in the new Testament; nor is the scholastic or systematic sense, in which

perfectly fulfil the will of God, but God himself alone.—Again, if he had not been very God, he could not have loosed the bands of death, neither have raised himself from death to life.

FURTHER : “ We must believe and confess this thing, that all we are conceived and born in sin. We are therefore by nature the children of God’s wrath, and should be damned for ever if Christ had not redeemed us by his holy passion. For he was made man for us, and did all things for us, which we were bound to do, and could not do; that is to say, he fulfilled the *law* for us, and took upon him all that cross which we most righteously had deserved for our iniquities and offences, and he shed his blood for us, that our sins might be forgiven us. All these things we ought stedfastly to believe. Wherefore they be in a great error, which will make satisfaction for their sins with fasting, prayer, alms-deed, and such like good works. For although we are bound to do these good works, yet they be not a sufficient price, ransom or satisfaction for our sins, but onely the death and blood of our

which divines have commonly applied it, to be found there.

saviour Christ was a sufficient and worthy sacrifice to take away our sins, and to obteyne for us forgiveness of our offences, as it is written in the second chapter of St. *John* his first epistle; Christ is that sacrifice that pacifieth God's displeasure, and obteyneth pardon for our sins, and not for our sins onely, but also for the sins of all the world."

VIII. *Body and blood of Christ.*

"The *third* sacrament is the Communion, or the Lord's Supper, by the which we be fed and nourished, and fortified in the faith of the gospel and knowledge of Christ; that by this food we may grow more and more in newness of life, so that we may be no longer children, but may wax perfect men, and full grown in Christ.—

"Although Christ prescribeth no certen time, when we ought to come together to his supper, although also he appoint no certeyn number of days, how often in the year we ought to receive this supper, yet this is his holy and godly will, that at *some time* we should receive this sacrament.—

"We ought to believe that in the sacrament, we receive truly the body and blood
of

of Christ. For God is almighty : he is able therefore to do all things what he will ; and as *St. Paul* writeth, He calleth those things which be not, as if they were. Wherefore when Christ taketh bread, and saith, ‘ Take, eat, this is my body,’ we ought not to doubt but we eat his very body. And when he taketh the cup, and saith, ‘ Take, drink, this is my blood,’ we ought to think assuredly, that we drink his very blood. And this we must believe, if we will be counted Christen men.

“ And whereas in this perilous time, certain deceitful persons be found in many places, who of very frowardnes will not grant that it is the very body and blood of Christ, but deny the same, for none other cause, but that they cannot compass by man’s blind reason, how this thing should be brought to pass, ye shall with all diligence beware of such persons, that ye suffer not yourselves to be deceived by them. For such men surely are not true Christians, neither as yet have they learned the first article of the creed, which teacheth that God is almighty. Wherefore eschew such erroneous opinions, and believe the words of our lord Jesus, that you eat and drink his very body and blood, although man’s reason cannot comprehend how and after what manner the same is

present. For the wisdom of reason must be subdued to the obedience of Christ, as the apostle *Paul* teacheth *.—

“ WHEREFORE doubt not but in the Lord's supper we receive the body and blood of Christ. For he hath said so, and by the power of his word hath caused it so to be. Wherefore seeing Christ saith, ‘ Do this, as often as ye do it, in remembrance of me,’ it is evident hereby, that Christ causeth, even at this time, his body and blood to be in the sacrament after that manner and fashion as it was at that time, when he made his Maundy [or celebrated his last supper] with his disciples. For else we could not do that thing which his disciples did. But Christ hath commanded us to do the self-same thing that his disciples did, and to do it in the remembrance of him, that is to say, to receive his body and blood, even so as he himself did give it to his disciples. And let not the foolish talk of unbelievers move you, who are wont to ask this question; ‘ How can the priest or minister make the body and blood of Christ?’

* To what part of *Paul's* teachings can we suppose the bishop here to allude?—If to 1 *Cor.* i. let us judge as favourably as we can of the misapprehension of so great and good a man.

To which I answer, that the minister doth not this, but Christ himself doth give unto us his flesh and blood, as his words doth evidently declare. — ‘When ye shall have examined yourselves, ye shall find that ye are sinners, and that ye have need that Christ should give his body for you, and shed his blood for you. And this to do, is truly to examine and try yourselves: —when ye do thus, then ye worthily receive the body and blood of Christ; and he that so receiveth it, receiveth everlasting life. For he doth not with his bodily mouth receive the body and blood of Christ, but he doth believe the words of Christ, whereby he is assured, that Christ’s body was given to death for us, and that his blood was shed for us. — And he that thus believeth, eateth and drinketh the body and blood of Christ *spiritually*.’ [This, by the way, seems to be a strange turn given all on the sudden to those strong words so much before insisted on, viz. ‘*the very body, the very blood; — doing the self-same thing which the disciples did;*’ that is to say, receiving his body and blood even so as He himself did give it to them, &c. Now all this corporiety is spiritualized, and it is not very easy to make the two accounts consistent. — To confirm this latter opinion, according to his interpretation of scripture (plainly misapplying it here, as is now well known to the learn-

ed,) this good man subjoins as follows, *I*
 “Of this *spiritual* eating, &c. Christ speak-
 eth when he saith (*John vi. **) ‘He that
 eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood,
 abideth in me, and I in him.’ And when
 we be planted in Christ, then we may come
 to this holy supper as often as we will, that
 by this *ghostly* food we may daily more and
 more wax stronger in our faith, that Christ
 was given to be the ransom for our sins,
 and that he dwelleth in us, and we in
 him. him.

“SEEING our saviour Christ doth give
 us his body to be our meat, and his blood
 to be our drink, and thereby doth declare

* The reformers all to a man understood this sixth chap-
 ter of St. *John* as treating of the *Lord's supper*, (though
 that, by the way, is no reason why we should understand
 it so too :) Thus in their *necessary erudition of a Chrysten*
man 1543, (which Mr. *Strype* says was chiefly of the arch-
 bishop's composing,) they have these words in their com-
 ment on the 4th petition of the *Lord's prayer* :

“By this bread, which we be taught to aske in this *Peti-
 tion*, may be understande the holy sacramente of the aultare,
 the very fleshe and bloude of our saviour *Jesu Christ*, as it is
 written in the vi chapter of *Sainte John* ; “I am the breade of
 lyfe, whiche came down from heaven. And the breade whiche
 I wyll gyue, is my fleshe, whiche I wyll gyue for the lyfe of
 the worlde.” And in this prayer we desyre, that the same
 maye be purely minystered, and distributed to the comfort and
 benefite of al vs, the true children of God.”

that he will effectually dwell in us, strengthen and preserve us to everlasting life, we may stedfastly believe that Christ doth work in us, and that he will give us ghostly strength and stedfastness, &c. And this is the meaning and plain understanding of the words of the Lord's supper.—Wherefore when ye be asked, What is the communion or the Lord's supper, ye may answer, "It is the true body, and true blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was ordained by Christ himself to be eaten and drunken of us Christian people under bread and wine.—So ye have the true understanding of the words of Christ, and the true use of the holy supper of the Lord."

See the *Communion-Office*.

IX. *Christ's descent into hell.*

THE original word *hades* is now sufficiently understood by the learned, which at the time of the reformation, and long after, it was not. Archbishop *Cranmer* understood κατελθοντα εἰς ᾅδου, of the local descent of Christ into the place of torment; and so did the famous Dr. *Peter Heylin*, who with sufficient assurance attacked the incomparably learned archbishop *Usher* on this head, who understood the matter better than both, and is now seconded

conded by all the best critics in *Europe*.
 —Our good reformer's words are these :
 “ Our Lord Jesus Christ was very God,
 and very man. As man he suffered death
 for us, and descended into *hell*. But as na-
 turally God, he loosed the bonds and pains
 of hell, he destroyed the kingdom of death,
 he rose from death to life, and so paid the
 ransom for our sins, and taketh away all
 the guiltiness of the same.”

THIS doctrine, it must be owned, conti-
 nued in the church a long time after, tho'
 rather heightened in some particulars. It
 may be worth while to see how the learned
 Dr. *Fulke* expresses the common belief con-
 cerning this article in his time. “ *We do*
constantly believe the article of our Creed that
our Saviour Christ descended into hell, by
suffering in soul the paynes due to God's jus-
tice, for the sins of all whom he redeemed;
and by vanquishing the Devil, and all the
power of hell, in working the redemption of
all the children of God.” Defence of the
English translations of the bible against
Martin, 1583, ch. 7, where he takes no-
 tice of “ *maister Latimer's error, as he calls*
it, of Christ's suffering torments in hell,
&c.”

SEE a curious note of Dr. *Nichols* on this
 subject, under the epistle for Easter-even.

and bewitchment of heart, he may bring them
 to dope. **X. Power of the Devil.**

“ BECAUSE man’s reason is blinded, it is easy for the Devil to lead man to all errors, as idolatry, heresies, witchcrafts, enchantments, and to all kind of superstitious and false doctrine. And these offences God doth punish with diverse and grievous plagues; as with pride, envy, contencion, detraction, slandering, lying, railing, &c. And hereof ensue divers diseases, sicknesses, &c. Also when man’s will is not ruled by God’s law, he runneth headlong into all kind of gross and horrible sin, as treason, sedition, adulteries, theft, extortion, &c. And because God of his justice cannot suffer such heinous sins unpunished, therefore he suffereth the Devil sometime to infect the air, sometime to stir up great and dangerous tempests and storms, sometime he permitteth him to destroy our houses, cattle, and riches, with fire or water. Again, God suffereth him sometime to have such power over us for our sins, that some he maketh to run mad, some he causeth to drown themselves, some to burn themselves, some to cut their own throats, some hang themselves. For this is Satan’s chief study, to drive men to such fear, trouble, and anguish of mind, that through pensiveness,
 and

and heaviness of heart, he may bring them to desperation. And this is his only intent and study, to bring as many as he can to everlasting damnation.

Thus “you have heard into how great and horrible evils we be brought unto by Original Sin, so that everi moment we be in danger to be drowned with the ragious floods thereof.”

If to the foregoing extracts, taken from the archbishop's *catechism*, we subjoin his unhappy notion concerning the enormous supremacy of the regal power, in religious as well as civil affairs, we shall be inclined to think (with all due respect to his real merits) that his grace was not more infallible in this, than he was in some of those other articles, which have been above produced. The account we have of the matter, in short, is this. Some of our reformers, in their zeal against the papal supremacy, stretched the regal to such an exorbitant height, as to reduce the church to be a mere creature of the state; and to declare that the King is the fountain of all authority, civil and ecclesiastical; and that it is lawful for him to revoke such authority at pleasure. At the head of those who entertained and avowed this opinion, was the

the good archbishop *Cranmer*. But Mr. *Strype* and others assure us, that on farther consideration, and conference with bishop *Ridley*, he relinquished that error.—This then being the case, what shall we say to Dr. *Balguy*, who seems fond of reviving that error, and giving it a fresh polish, in an age when it was thought to have been covered over with rust, and never like to have been scoured up again, and recommended to the world for true sterling divinity of the church of *England*?

REFLECTIONS

ON THE FOREGOING EXTRACTS.

I. **O**NE very obvious reflection occurring on a survey of the whole is this ; that the protestant religion being then in its infancy, and not sufficiently purged from erroneous doctrines, which our reformers had imbibed in their earlier, and were too fond of retaining in their riper years, it was rather too hasty a step taken by them, to draw up a system of doctrines which should tie down the belief of their fellow-protestants to the precise measure and dimension

mention of their own, and especially so as to include posterity also in the strait inclosure. An attempt of this kind, for which they had no authority from God, tho' they had from the state, would have been better postponed to more enlightened times, if to any.

2. THERE was one thing somewhat incongruous in the conduct of these reformers, that whilst they professed to make the holy *scriptures* the rule of their reformation, they too often varied from the true meaning and design of those scriptures, and yet openly declared, that in their expositions, they had given the world the true sense of them. Thus in the dedication of their *Institution of a Christian man* to King Henry VIII. (1537,) they assure his Majesty, that “ having determined their
“ sentence in all things contained in their
“ treatise, according to the very true mean-
“ ing of scripture, we do offer (say they)
“ the same herewith unto your most ex-
“ cellent Majesty, most humbly beseech-
“ ing the same to permit and suffer it, in
“ case it shall be so thought meet to your
“ most excellent wisdom, to be printed,
“ and so with your supreme power set
“ forth.” But is it not seemingly a strange piece of inconsistency, after averring that they had given the *very true meaning of*
scrip-

scripture, they should yet, immediately
 after, submit that very true meaning to be
 altered and corrected by the King? “ And
 “ albeit, most dread and benigne sovereign
 “ Lorde, we do affirm by our lernynges
 “ with one consent, that the said treatise
 “ is in all points so concordant and agree-
 “ able to holy scripture, as we trust your
 “ Majesty shall receive the same, as a thing
 “ most sincerely and purely handled to the
 “ glory of God, your grace’s honour, the
 “ utility of your people, the which things
 “ your highness we may well see and per-
 “ ceive, doth chiefly in the same desire :
 “ yet we do most humbly submit it to the
 “ most excellent wisdom and exact juge-
 “ ment of your Majesty, to be recognised,
 “ overseen, and corrected,” &c. And yet,
 to give proof of their imperfection in divi-
 nity, and conviction of some mistakes they
 had made in the foregoing treatise, did they
 not, a few years after, acknowledge their
 mistakes, by rectifying several things there-
 in, which, upon farther inquiry, they plain-
 ly discerned to be erroneous? as appears by
 comparing the *Necessary Erudition*, which
 came out about five years after, with the
 preceding *Institution*. And did not *Cran-*
mer himself see reason to change his former
 opinion concerning the elements in the
 Lord’s supper, when he came to examine
 the

the matter more accurately, perceiving the untenableness of what he had maintained before on that head?—These are sufficient evidences of the impuberty of their understandings in divine things, when they took upon them to prescribe to the understandings of others, and, that their assuming that office was premature.

3. It was not to be expected that men, who had so long sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, should be able all at once to transplant themselves into the regions of light and truth. They opened their eyes but gradually to discern that light, and, if they had lived in these times, it cannot be doubted but they would have understood the scriptures better, and rejected several human crudities, which they then supposed to be divine verities.—And as to *Cranmer* in particular, every one acquainted with his history, knows that he was a sincere lover of truth, one that diligently sought it, and gladly embraced it when he found it, though he sometimes missed of it, after all his searches. Had his lot fallen in these times, he would without question have had different sentiments from what he had, in many points relating to religion; and would either not have projected any articles at all concerning it, or would have made

made those he compiled, much fewer than they are, and more conformable to scripture, considered in its true sense and latitude. Nor can we well suppose, that being so honest and unprejudiced a man as he was, and so thoroughly devoted to the interests of truth, wherever he could discern it, it would have been in his power to have withstood the force of the arguments which have been so strongly urged of late years in favour of religious liberty, and in opposition to the enjoining of confessions, and of subscriptions to them.

4. WITH regard to the *catechism* so often mentioned, suppose the good archbishop had judged it adviseable (with the consent of the civil powers) to require *subscription* to that catechism, as he did to the articles, and other ecclesiastical determinations; or suppose such a proposal now made: would not many judicious and conscientious men scruple such a subscription? would not many remonstrate against the proposal, and urge cogent reasons for suppressing it? — There are indeed many excellent things in that catechism, which must please every man of true piety and integrity. A native plainness, simplicity and honesty, the characteristics of all his writings, appear in the whole performance; and it is a good

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pattern

pattern for the clergy to follow in their catechetical instructions to the young and ignorant. There are at the same time, it must be confessed, in this composition, some things made up of such coarse materials (as you have in part seen above) that I can by no means recommend them: And if that catechism, or those doctrines, were now re-introduced, and taught anew in our churches, what would be the consequence? Would our congregations relish them? Would they not rather be surpris'd, and stare, exclaim against them as strange and unheard of doctrines, run out of our churches, and forbear frequenting them any longer?

5. AND yet I am perswaded that there are a set of men at this time in these kingdoms, who would approve of all those extracts, readily subscribe them, and ardently preach them. Nor probably would there be wanting, even among those who affect to be reputed our most orthodox and stanch churchmen, some who would as readily do the same, and strenuously abet and defend every article, both from the press, and from the pulpit. Such are the various humours and turns of mens minds, especially when they take any odd conceit into their heads, about what they esteem religion:

*They feed upon opinions, errors, dreams,
And make or think them truths.*

6. SUPPOSE, upon this occasion, it be queried, what deference the archbishop might judge to be due to the doctrines delivered in his catechism, or to any other such human instructions in matters of religion? the answer must be, that his own rule, expressed in his own words, in this very catechism, resolves the query sufficiently: in which, as well as in the sixth article, he expressly and plainly teaches, that all human doctrines and expositions in such matters, must refer ultimately to, and be decided by, the word of God; this alone being the final test of all points delivered as Christian doctrines.

THESE are his declarations in different places.

“ TRUE faith must ever be staid upon the certain word and work of God.”

“ A CHRISTIAN man ought to believe nothing as an article of his faith, except he be assured, that either it is God’s commandment or his word.”

“ OUR Lord Jesus Christ hath given his
H 2 ministers

ministers plain instructions, what they ought to teach and do. And if they teach or do any other thing than is contained in their commission, then it is of no force, nor ought we to regard it."—These propositions are undeniable. Many honest and learned protestants do justly wish, that all our articles were equally so.

7. UPON the whole, it is sufficiently evident, on a careful survey of the foregoing extracts and observations, that it was an ill-timed resolution taken by our reformers, to draw up articles to be the standards of doctrine, at a time when they were not duly qualified for such a work ; at a crisis when they saw many things in the theology of the times, but as through a glass darkly ; and consequently when they could not reasonably demand subscription to what was not clear and evident, and which they could be sure the sacred scripture would thoroughly warrant, being taken in its native sense : which sense it was the duty of Christians to inquire after to the utmost, and to adhere to with steadiness when discovered, after having made an honest and faithful search to this purpose.

WOULD our reformers themselves have liked to be so treated by others ? How did they
they

they relish the act of six articles (only six) when imposed upon them by the ruling powers? whom they could not resist; and if they yielded, they could not do it, we may suppose, without some reluctance, perhaps a great one. And therefore *Latimer* and *Sbaxton*, finding their consciences would not permit them to comply, very honestly quitted their respective bishopricks.

SUBSCRIPTIONS have stuck with many from that time to this. We hardly ever heard of subscription by *proxy*, either proposed or permitted to be made by the clergy, in these later ages of the church. And yet we are well assured, that in former times, emperors, kings, and generally all Christians, subscribed to the decrees of the church, either by themselves, or by their substitutes. I say nothing about the propriety of such a subscription, nor do I think it would be to the honour or interest of religion to permit it to take place and be practised in the church. Much more honourable and more justifiable methods may be thought of to give ease to tender consciences. And after all, the best remedy perhaps would be, the total abolishment of all subscriptions. That well known observation of bishop *Burnet* will always hold

true, viz. Churches and societies are much better secured by laws, than by subscriptions.

As to the proper time for dismissing these encroachments upon Christian liberty, that act of honourable indulgence to their subjects (however earnestly to be wished for) must be submitted to the wisdom of our governors.

To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven 12.

N° V.

Thoughts on subscriptions required from the clergy.

IT is allowed on all hands that the *Apostles Creed* is a complete summary of Christian faith and doctrine²⁰. The basis upon which that Creed is erected, and from which its articles are deduced, is the holy *scripture*.—Is the scripture to be interpreted by this creed, or this creed by the scripture? Judge which of the two is the most probable and the most reasonable; the one being of divine authority, the other of no higher origin than human.

THE declarations on this head, made by those two great men, Bishop *Pearson*, and the late Lord *King*, deserve regard.

THE former, having well considered the matter, declares it as his judgement, “That whatsoever is delivered in the *creed*, we must therefore believe, because it is contained in the *scriptures*, and consequently must *so* believe,

lieve, as it is contained *there* :” adding,
 “ That where the church assigns no proof
 from *scripture*, she leaves us to *private*
judgement.” Exp. of the 5th. art.

THE latter, having considered this point
 with equal accuracy, asserts, That every
 man’s *private judgement* of the sense and
 meaning of the *creed*, is to be tried and de-
 termined by the holy *scriptures*, the only
 perfect and infallible rule of faith ; by which
 even the *creed* itself, and every explication
 thereof, must be tried and judged ; and they
 [the *creed* and explication,] are no farther
 to be received, than as they are consonant
 and agreeable thereto : Which is according
 to the sixth article of the church of *Eng-
 land*.” *Pref. to crit. hist. of the creed*.

Now what can be said in refutation of
 these positions ? Can any consistent prote-
 stant, any sensible and considerate member
 of the church of *England* deny them ? If
 he does, or can, he recedes from the fun-
 damental principles of this church, and
 gives too much countenance to those of the
 mother of abominations, from whose vassa-
 lage our worthy reformers so gloriously re-
 covered their Christian liberty, and so care-
 fully transmitted it down to Us, to preserve
 and maintain to the latest posterity “.

I CONSIDER the matter thus.

THE *scripture* is the text. The *creed* is the comment. Now can the comment overrule the text? Can it alter its original meaning? If not, the text continues still as it was; its original meaning remains still the same. No law can deprive a man of his right of *private judgement* in reference to either. Consequently he is at liberty to form his judgement of both, as shall appear to him to be most consistent with reason and truth.

A LEARNED and conscientious clergyman coming for institution to a late worthy prelate, took the liberty to ask his lordship, Whether he must be understood by his subscription to resign his judgement in religious concerns to the dictates of authority, and to tie himself down to any other sense of scripture than what should appear to him, upon fair inquiry, to be the true and genuine sense thereof. The Bishop, discerning at once the honest design of the question, returned this civil and candid answer: " Sir, I have no other concern with your subscription, than to see that you *do* subscribe. I ask you no questions upon the subject, and
you

you need ask me none. Your liberty, for Me, remains unaltered and undiminished."

THIS was fair and equitable on both sides. Nor have I the least reason to doubt, but, that what the bishop here said, expresses upon the whole the united sense of the venerable order of our superiors in the church, concerning such matters.

Now laying together, fairly and without prejudice, these several considerations touching the superiority of *scripture* to any human creeds, or other forms of religious doctrine, let us apply them briefly to the case of subscription to any particular articles of the church of *England*. Suppose, for instance, that of predestination, or of the descent into hades, or any other to which subscription is required. To satisfy myself on this head, I will first see what the *scripture* declares concerning it, setting down before me, in one view, and in just connection, the very words of scripture, without tacking to them any comment, any exposition, either of my own, or of any other persons, in order to accommodate them to the tenets of any human system. Now whatever is the true original sense of *scripture* herein, that must in course, and in all
reason

reason and equity, be the sense in which I am to subscribe the article proposed. Nor can I, consistently with my protestant principles,—with my professed subjection to Christ as the supreme head and lawgiver of his church, and the sole author and finisher of my faith,—or with my dutiful acknowledgement of scripture-authority as superior to all other authority in matters of faith,——or with my express declaration to that purpose in my subscription to the sixth article of the church of *England*, subscribe in any other sense whatever ²².

THOSE who may be of a different mind about these matters, I freely permit to enjoy their own sentiments, having no more to do with *their* conscience and judgement in such things, than they have to do with *mine* ; which is just nothing at all. What I have written, I have written with freedom, on mature reflection, and on a full persuasion of the right of private judgement ; a privilege which I shall always claim, as a Christian, and a Protestant.

O B S E R V A T I O N S

UPON THE FOREGOING SUBJECT.

IT is next to impossible for any body of men, however learned, dignified or distinguished, however vested with public authority, revered for their judgement, or honoured for their elevation, to draw up such a set of articles of religion to be subscribed by the clergy, as will give general and just content, and to which every thoughtful, judicious and conscientious clergyman, having carefully examined and considered them, can readily assent and freely subscribe ; thereby in effect declaring, that those articles do precisely express his own sentiments upon the several points therein concluded, and that he believes they express the very sense of scripture on such heads.

THE reasons are evident.

1. THE compilers are but men, frail and fallible, like others of their fellow-beings.

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2. THEY commonly accede to the work with their prejudices about them,—their preconceptions in favour of this or that particular tenet or system, to which they have been for some time devoted. We have a strong instance of this in the account of the *Irish* articles, drawn up in 1615, by no less able and eminent a divine than the most learned and venerable *Usher*, the glory of that church, and of the whole republic of letters. He had imbibed early prejudices in favour of some of the narrow tenets of the great doctor of *Geneva*, and accordingly took the liberty to incorporate into the body of those articles the nine decrees of *Lambeth*; which gave just offence to many learned and judicious men of more enlarged minds. *Keylin's life of Laud*, 194, 195.

3. WHEN the numerous members of a convocation meet together to draw up articles, Are they all of the same mind with regard to the several points to be determined by them? Do they not discuss those questions over and over, pro and con, before they come (if they come at last) to a final conclusion? And is it not too well known, how much party and faction generally operate in those assemblies, and the prevailing influence of authority and interest,

terest, in the event, determines all? though many of the members may still at the bottom remain dissentients, and could wish that matters (some particulars at least) had been ordered otherwise.

4. If the convocation can be supposed to be thus divided in their sentiments before they come to a conclusion about them, Can it be supposed that the rest of the clergy, so concluded in their absence by the determinations of their superiors, would not, if they had been assembled in the same convocation, or (which is more feasible) in any lesser departments and classes within their respective districts, have had also their different sentiments upon those topics, during the debates about them in those assemblies? Would they not have declared these sentiments openly in the course of the debate? And would they not afterwards also (I mean after closing up the final sentence) if they were left to their liberty, probably do the same, expressing themselves to the same purpose in delivering their mind on each article? — How then, it will be asked by some, can it well be supposed, that so large a body of men (not pretending to inspiration) as the whole clergy of *England, Ireland*, and of several extensive colonies abroad,

abroad, should in a manner all at once become so unanimous in their opinions and confessions, touching a great number of articles, as readily to assent to every one of them, and to testify that assent by setting their hand to them? And yet some of those articles are supposed, by many learned men, to be abstruse enough, and (barring the precluding sentence) still disputable.—With the proper answer to this question, I have no concern at present, leaving every person concerned to satisfy his own mind in the best manner he can. — The objections however, now so current, are stronger arguments for *dropping* the present subscriptions altogether, than they are against indulging a *latitude* of sense in subscribing.— The subscription (since it continues to be imposed) may still be rational and consistent, if a latitude be allowed. If not allowed (and do any of our ecclesiastical governors disallow it?) that same subscription may possibly, in some instances, carry the appearance of subscribing to absurdities, at least to certain tenets that cannot be sufficiently warranted by scripture, taken in its original and true sense. — After all, it would surely be better upon the whole, (as I said) to put an end at once to these uncandid, though not always unplaussible objections, by putting an end to the *causes* of Them. — These
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considerations should no longer be disregarded, nor the proper remedies postponed. — If much longer postponed, what will be the consequences? *Lector judicet æquus.*

5. Whereas “the avoiding diversities of opinions, and establishing consent touching true religion,” was at first the well-meant design of setting up these boundaries, and marking out the precise limits of the faith which was once delivered to the saints; unhappy experience hath since abundantly convinced all reasonable and observing men, that this was a great mistake of our worthy ancestors; being a thing that never could be accomplished by any human means; besides, that it was inconsistent with the principle of liberty upon which they had so lately broke off from the encroachments of *Rome*. The principles of liberty are much better understood in this age, than they were in the days of our reformers, when just reasoning was comparatively but in its infancy. Later ages have entered deeper into the subject, stated it with greater exactness, elucidated it in a clearer manner, and corroborated it with greater force of reason, than could have been imagined in the darker times. No rational man now doubts of the natural and Christian right of private judgement, which no laws of man can invalidate.

validate. Judgement is free, and must remain so.---In short, considering the general state of the mental frame, and the design of Providence in adjusting it, a strict uniformity in opinion is morally impossible, and therefore not to be expected, much less to be insisted upon as necessary, or indeed, all circumstances considered, as even expedient, towards either the preventing or the terminating of differences about matters of mere opinion or speculation.

To the foregoing remarks we may presume to add,

6. THAT it may perhaps be somewhat questioned, and not without reason, Whether or how far the authority of any protestant church or churches may extend to prescribe articles, or to decide controversies, about matters of faith ; or whether, upon the whole, such authority may not either be justly thought, or at least shrewdly suspected, to border somewhat too nearly upon that usurpation of *dominion* over the *faith* and religious liberty of our fellow-christians, which the apostles, though divinely inspired, absolutely disclaimed, and our Lord himself forbade us to exercise, we being all brethren to each other, and fellow-servants under Him the supreme ruler

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of his church, and the sole founder of our faith and religion.

SEVERAL just objections have been made from time to time, for more than a century past, to the present form of subscription, and to more than one or two of the particular objects of it; and much unhappy controversy hath frequently subsisted on this subject.—It may, on many just and weighty considerations, be wished and requested, that the terms of subscription, hitherto insisted on, were somewhat moderated, and rendered less exceptionable, and less difficult to be complied with in certain cases; especially where any honest and conscientious persons find themselves obliged to forbear engaging in our ministry, on the account of these and the like obstacles lying in their way. The relaxation is surely reasonable, and highly desirable; nor is it so difficult to be accomplished, as may by some be imagined. Prejudice and obstinacy apart, it might, I am persuaded, be easily and safely effected; and the church would be so far from being a loser, that she would by degrees be a real gainer, by such a generous condescension, and just and equitable indulgence, towards her free-born children.

SUPPOSE a specimen or two should be here submitted to serious and impartial consideration. Possibly some persons who may scruple the present form, may have no objection to the following, or some other of the like import.

I declare myself a Christian and a Protestant. I believe and assert that the holy Scriptures of the old and new Testament (as acknowledged and referred to in the sixth article of the church of England) contains the whole will of God relating to the salvation of man, through Christ Jesus; and will make those Scriptures the rule and foundation of my instructions and exhortations to those who shall be committed to my ministerial charge: Nor will I teach any other doctrine, either in public or in private, but what I am and shall be persuaded to be the will and doctrine of God therein contained.

A. B.

Or :

I do here profess and declare my sincere and firm belief in One God, the Creator, Preserver and Governor of the world: And in Jesus Christ the Son of God and Saviour of the world: And in the Holy Spirit of God and of Christ, as described in the Scriptures. I be-

lieve the divine authority of the Scriptures, as generally received among Christians; and their sufficiency for salvation through faith in Christ. I believe the necessity of a godly, righteous and sober life, and its acceptableness with God to salvation through him. I believe all things revealed in the Scriptures for that end;—the mediation of Christ, the aids of his spirit, the resurrection of the dead, the general judgement, and the future state of rewards and punishments. I renounce all authority in matters of faith beside that of the Scriptures; and do promise that I will carefully study those Scriptures, and that I will teach and preach no other doctrine or doctrines as necessary to salvation, but what I am and shall be persuaded to be agreeable to the Scriptures, and to express the true meaning and design thereof.

A. B.

SUPPOSE now, it should be left to the choice of candidates for orders, and of those who apply for institution into benefices, to subscribe either the one or the other of these or the like forms before their admission; such a subscription might reasonably be judged sufficient to answer any or all useful purposes for which the present forms can be supposed to be designed, or can indeed possibly accomplish, without infringing the rule of moral equity, and doing injury

injury to the just claims of rational and Christian liberty: which liberty should never be curtailed in any points of moment, and which a strict imposition of problematical opinions hath always incommoded, and ever will incommode, and perhaps at last totally destroy.

If these or the like tests, tho' really in themselves sufficient to answer all the reasonable purposes of subscription in any truly protestant church, should after all be deemed insufficient, or thought to fall short of the end in view; all I can say farther is, that to prevent all future differences on this head, and to secure the peace of the state, in reference to such matters, a set of well-composed *Hemilies*, upon the plainest and most necessary subjects of religion, and the best adapted for general instruction and common benefit, may be enjoined and authorised by the state, to be distinctly and solemnly pronounced, in regular order, from year to year, by the stated minister or ministers, in all churches and chapels throughout the realm. Such a provision and injunction, preferable at least to the present touching subscription, might upon the whole be of considerable service to the community, and contribute in a good degree to prevent or moderate litigations on this

head, and other topics of religion, which are so often detrimental to the public tranquillity.

I DESIRE it may be noted, that what is here proposed concerning *Homilies*, is principally intended to obviate an objection that may be suggested against discontinuing the present forms of subscription to articles; and is by no means intended to preclude, or in the least to interfere with, the most useful and necessary duty of *preaching*; a duty of divine institution, and not to be dispensed with by any human authority. Wise and good men, true ministers of Christ, having made the proper declaration and subscription, as above proposed, will always keep within their just bounds, being careful to observe their engagements, and do honour to their function; and may safely be entrusted with the discharge of the important office of *preaching*.

NOR will this liberty render the use of the *homilies* needless. They may still be kept up, and publicly read as proposed, every year, to the no small benefit of christian auditories, especially the more illiterate part of them, who greatly stand in need of such plain instructions, and for whose improvement in Christian knowledge

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and practice such popular discourses ought to be chiefly calculated.

A NOBLE collection of this kind might be made (if made with true judgement, and without intermixing any points of doubtful disputation) out of the best *English* sermons already extant : And such a collection would do real honour to this church and nation, and particularly to the clergy ; exhibiting such illustrious examples in this kind to other protestant churches, if not also to that of *Rome*.

IF any clergymen, after subscription (as before supposed) shall make *undue use* of the liberty of preaching, and persist to misapply that liberty, the state, after having given due admonition, may very justly, either totally prohibit their preaching, or, which may on some accounts be better, confine them to the use of the homilies only ; as they may also, for a while confine young divines, not as yet sufficiently exercised in the word and ministry, and less acquainted with the true design of preaching the gospel of Christ to the world. Which is not to acquire temporary lucre here, but to prepare men for life and immortality hereafter.

N° VI.

Candid sentiments in favour of dutiful applications for a review.

CANDOUR, benevolence, and generosity of temper, joined with good sense and solid judgement, will always incline men to judge favourably of any well meant attempt, conducted with moderation, to serve the interest of true religion, and promote the honour of the *English* reformation.

SEVERAL endeavours of this kind have been exerted of late years, and been well received and approved by men of serious piety, unbiaſſed in their affections, and unprejudiced in their inquiries: who well understood the Christian religion, and wished to ſee many things in the church of *England* rectified, according to the model of that religion; being well-known friends to
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this church, and men who understand, and would promote its true interest.

SOME indeed have stood out in opposition to these benevolent undertakings, and done what they could to prevent the good success of them. The motives to this opposition are sufficiently obvious, and scarce any one that has any tolerable knowledge of the world, and the self-interested views of many men in it (regardless, in comparison, of the interests of true Christianity,) can fail of guessing aright concerning the hidden springs of these perverse proceedings.

OTHER things in the writings of this prejudiced set of men, may be borne with; but bitterness and virulence (the common effects of church-bigotry) are inexcusable—With how much better spirit, better sense, and better judgement, does a most learned and worthy person (now deservedly exalted to one of the highest stations in the church) speak of all good endeavours tending to the improvement of it, and calculated for the advancement of true religion in it: Enough one would think, to excite at least some little diffidence, and even of regret and self-condemnation, in those who have hitherto been so peremptory and assuming, and, not unfrequently, contemptuous and overbearing,

ing, in their treatment of their brethren on these and the like occasions.

“ LET no one lightly entertain suspicions of any serious proposal for the advancement of religious knowledge; nor out of unreasonable prejudice endeavour to obstruct any inquiry, that professes to aim at the farther illustration of the great scheme of the gospel in general, or the removal of error in any part, in faith, in doctrine, in practice, or in worship.” Dr. *Lowth's* visitation-sermon at *Durham*, 1758, published at the request of the Lord Bishop of that diocese.

ANOTHER well-tempered and judicious divine of our establishment, having observed the indiscreet conduct and malevolent spirit of some men, in opposing all good designs for farther reformation and improvement in this church, thus delivers his thoughts with moderation and reason.

“ SOME few things in our established mode of worship and discipline have been thought capable of being better adapted to the design of Christianity, and representations have been made from time to time, proposing to bring these things to a maturer and more accurate revival. Such representations, it is true, have been too often made with an indecent acrimony of style, and ground-

groundless invectives against the present spirit of the church itself, and the fairest characters that have ever adorned it. To these, the most effectual answer would be an example of greater moderation and candour in ourselves. We have indeed no other way of confuting this calumny, but by evidencing the same principles now, which originally gave rise to our happy constitution; by our general readiness to embrace the truth, in what garb, and from what quarter soever it may chance to be conveyed to us, by our free acknowledgement upon conviction, should there appear to be a real expediency for such a revival, and consistently with this conviction, by our unanimous concurrence in every prudent endeavour, and seasonable application to procure it. — Should the candid and respectful disquisitions of sincere and hearty well-wishers to our establishment, upon the possibility of raising it a single step nearer to perfection, be represented as tending not to improve, to strengthen and perpetuate it, but to overturn and ruin it altogether; will it not be said, that very slender indeed is our esteem of the solidity, or fundamental right construction of the fabric itself, if we suspect its ability to stand a slight examination? But if it shall appear that we cast them aside with contempt, or answer them
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only with illiberal abuse, an overbearing method of disputation, and every little art of evading and perplexing the point in debate, will not our adversaries be ready to remind us of the similar conduct of the Scribes and Pharisees of old, and the severity of the censure passed upon them by truth and righteousness itself? How cheap a triumph shall we thus afford them, by injudiciously stooping to the same low shifts in defence of a better cause! Let us rather openly shew that we fear no consequences of bringing our excellent establishment to the strictest scrutiny, by cheerfully uniting our endeavours, our good wishes at least, for that purpose, with those of every decent and fair disquisitor, never doubting but its own intrinsic merit upon the whole, will of itself protect from injury every essential and important part of it.

— “ All human regulations without exemption are amenable to the bar of reason. They may claim obedience, it is true, from every member of a community, as far as they are consistent with the laws of God. Notwithstanding this, whatever natural rights men may in a social state be reasonably led or compelled to surrender, their right of *private judgement* must remain for ever unalienable, as well with respect to ecclesiastical

clestial as to civil regulations. Decently
 to remonstrate against any inconvenience
 apprehended to arise from human laws of
 either sort, should by no means be deemed
 incompatible with all the deference that is
 due to the authority of their superiors ; all
 the requisite observance being in the mean
 time dutifully submitted to, and all just
 acknowledgements humbly paid to the good
 intentions of the imposers. Instead of re-
 senting this conduct as an insult against an
 establishment founded on religious liberty,
 let us be assured that its most venerable
 guardians regard it rather as a testimony of
 a sincere esteem of their judgement and
 candour, as proceeding from a real per-
 suasion, that they consider their exalted
 station as an engagement to distinguish
 themselves in support of the principles of
true protestantism.—In fact, no offence is
 likely to be taken by those, who are prin-
 cipally concerned to declare it, at any at-
 tempt conducted with the same spirit, to
 strike out from the most harmonious and
 complete constitution, every occasion of
 discord, every shadow of an imperfection.”
 Dr. *Duncan's* sermon at the Bishop of
Winchester's annual visitation at *Basingstoke*,
 1769. In p. 22, is a proper note ²⁴ refer-
 ring to Dr. *Balguy's* sermon at the conse-
 cration of the Bishop of *Landaff*.

SOME controverted doctrines contained in the *articles* of the church, “ have been interpreted in a different sense by writers of the first authority in the church. This *latitude* of construction seems to have been claimed and allowed from the beginning. It has been defended by almost all who have written professedly upon them; and they have certainly, for more than a century past, been generally interpreted, and that openly and avowedly, and therefore, I hope honestly, with this latitude. But it is still pain and grief to ingenuous minds to *subscribe* to forms, which in their first appearance they cannot approve. I must therefore earnestly join with those who wish to see the ministers of our church relieved from this burden: from which, though bound by the same law, and formerly attached, at least as firmly by prejudice, to the rigid interpretation, the ministers of our dissenting churches have found a way, and are, I am informed, very generally allowed by their congregations, as well as by the magistrate, to exempt themselves. That there have been, and may still subsist, many difficulties in the way of attempting this alteration in our national church, every thinking and candid person will allow. And therefore, till this
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can be done, it seems a duty in all to forbear complaining of their superiors, and so judge charitably of those, who, in subscribing the same forms, assume a liberty of differing from them in the manner of interpretation: and for which licence they may now surely plead the tacit consent and allowance both of the church and state." Dr. *Adams's* sermon intitled *A test of true and false doctrines*, preached at *Salop*, 1769.—Concerning the dropping of subscriptions in several protestant congregations in *England*²⁵, see *Remarks on the second and third letters against the Confessional*, 1768, p. 28.

Some farther remarks on the same subject.

DR. *Adams's* observation is a very just one, that tho' the articles are now generally interpreted with a *latitude*, and that, without any apparent disapprobation on the part of the governors, still it is *pain and grief to ingenuous minds to subscribe to forms, which in their first appearance they cannot approve*. Is the continuing to enjoin this practice, either so desirable and necessary on the part of the governors, that it cannot be dispensed with; or so agreeable and convenient on that of the governed, that they will be loath to give up a custom en-
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tailed upon them by their venerable ancestors? Will it not be thought that the conduct of the former, may have too much in it of the appearance of usurping dominion over conscience, and that the conduct of the latter may seem to carry some resemblance of practising the long exploded doctrine of *passive obedience*? The situation of the latter in this respect, seems to be by no means eligible; and it may well be hoped, that it is in the power of the former to relieve their brethren under these difficulties²⁶. It cannot surely be supposed that the Apostles, if they were still living, would lay upon them such burdens; nor can it reasonably be imagined, that since this practice is found to be now existing, being enjoined and enforced by mere human authority, they would commend gospel-ministers for so tamely giving up their gospel-liberty, and much less if thereby they brought their consciences into a snare, and departed in any degree from the integrity and simplicity of the Christian character. When *Peter* debased himself by criminal compliances, inconsistent with that character, in order to ingratiate himself with a prevailing sect, *St. Paul*, we are told, withstood him to the face, and cogently remonstrated against those compliances, as unsuitable to the profession

profession of a Christian, and much more of a Christian minister, whose principal care and concern it should be, that the ministry might not by his misconduct be justly blamed. Where the Apostle plainly intimates the necessity of being upon guard against temptation, and every inducement to offend conscience. No political motives, no prudential considerations, no worldly interests, should induce us to act inconsistently with known duty.

AND besides, we ought to pay some decent regard to the sentiments of the *world* concerning our conduct in this matter. For, however we may satisfy ourselves, whether upon principles of expedience and present interest, or those of any more laudable nature, the world will generally entertain but an indifferent opinion of our integrity in our subscriptions, and will impute them to other motives than a persuasion of the truth of what we subscribe to. Severe have been the censures, and frequent the charges, thrown out against the clergy in this view. Churchmen, as they would still be thought, have joined with unbelievers in the cry; which is now become a common topic of conversation and of pamphlets, and lessens the esteem of the clergy among the people. A very keen unbeliever speaks with great contempt both

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of them and of their subscriptions:—"Those dirty fences, says he, of the church called *subscriptions*; which are not only the stain of a good conscience, but discouragements in the study of the scriptures," [how little soever he regarded those scriptures.] And again, he charges the clergy as being in these and the like respects a very bad sort of men, paying little or no regard to honour and conscience, integrity and truth, when their interest comes in competition with either. "The clergy, he says, in their principles, in their oaths, and in their *subscriptions*, are so accustomed to *prevaricate* with God and man!"—The other class of objectors, no less virulent, and of the two more heated with zeal, speak of this reverend fraternity as a set of men, "who have impiously and hypocritically set their hands to doctrines, which in their hearts they never assented to,—carrying on a solemn farce of subscribing," &c. Again: "Religion (they observe) is sadly exposed and brought into contempt, by the conduct of too many of the clergy, in subscribing to what they do not believe, and submitting to the lowest and basest equivocations in order to defend proceedings, which in every other sphere of life would be condemned as contrary to all the received principles of common honesty and fair dealing amongst men." And the objectors corroborate

robamate their observations with those noted words of Dr. *Waterland*; “ If either state-oaths on the one hand, or church-subscriptions on the other, once come to be made light of, and subtleties be invented to defend or palliate such gross insincerity; we may bid farewell to principles, and religion will be little else but disguised atheism.” — Serious men will allow, that these words carry weight with them, and deserve to be regarded; and zealots will not fail to turn them into obloquies and reproaches. Now,

CAN we hear these obloquies, and bear with these reproaches from year to year, without concern, without emotion, without any endeavours to cut off the occasion of them; which is so obvious to every one’s view, and cannot be denied to be prejudicial to the interest of religion, as it brings such severe reflections upon the teachers of it.

FOR my own part, I am fully convinced, that these and the like reflections will always be flung out against the clergy of the church of *England*, so long as they are tied down by their governors to the necessity of subscribing to human forms; which are, some of them at least, of dubious interpretation, if not also of dubious authority, and are

and will always be a means of perpetuating debate and contention (instead of *establishing consent touching true religion*) among his Majesty's subjects in these kingdoms. And are debates and contentions such desirable things among fellow-christians, fellow-protestants, and fellow-subjects under the same government? The interest of our country in church and state, calls for commiseration, calls for redress in this matter: a favour which it may be hoped will not be much longer delayed. The occasions are pressing, the disorders menacing, and probably will be growing, till a redress is granted. Which, as far as hitherto appears, can no other way be accomplished, than by dropping the present forms of subscription altogether, and contriving some other and better method, which is sufficiently feasible, of securing a set of faithful ministers to the church, and restoring peace to it²⁷.

T H E

EDITOR'S REMARKS

On N^o I.

*A*ND, in effect, the text into the bargain.] The text is *Heb. xiii. 17.* Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls.—Of the numerous obstacles which are found in the way of scripture-knowledge, there is scarce any one we have greater reason to lament, than the supineness with which so many are observed to rely on the judgement of commentators, to the distrust or neglect of their own understandings. “It has never been doubted,” says *Dr. Balguy*, “that the authority of which the Apostle here speaks, is *Church-authority*.” Perhaps we should find, were we to make the search, that the doctor is under a mistake in supposing this has *never* been doubted. But if we should not, yet the suffrage of the whole tribe of expositors ought not to have had any weight, where so

little beside appeared to countenance such an interpretation.

THAT the Apostle speaks here of church-authority, "*sufficiently* appears," it is said, "from the reason assigned for our subjection. We are to obey our governors, because they watch *for our souls*: a circumstance which clearly points out spiritual authority, and distinguishes it from civil."—This is a most trivial circumstance indeed, and which one is surprised to find a man of Dr. *Balguy's* erudition, laying so great a stress upon. From the mere *English* reader alone such an observation might be expected. So then it should seem, that if it had been rendered—"for they watch for you"—instead of, for "YOUR SOULS"—the objects of that obedience and subjection which the Apostle recommends, might be our *civil* governors; at least, *spiritual* authority would not have been "clearly pointed out." And can the doctor be ignorant, that $\psi\chi\eta$ is frequently used by the sacred writers for the *whole person*?—To mention no other instance, it is so used in *Rom. xiii. 1.* and that on the very subject of obedience and submission to *civil* authority. "*Let every SOUL ($\psi\chi\eta$) [every person] be subject to the higher powers.*"

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WE may observe also, that the circumstance in the text under consideration, which is supposed so clearly to point out spiritual authority, viz. “*they watch for your souls*”—depends upon an *uncertain* rendering of the original. If the comma after *υμων* had been placed after the word *ἀγρυπνεῖσιν*, the rendering must not have been “*they watch for your souls*”—but, “*they watch, as they that must give an account for your souls*”—[of or concerning you.] And this punctuation is both admissible on grammatical principles, and conformable also to the reading of the *Alexandrine Copy* itself, which puts *ὑπὲρ τῶν ψυχῶν υμῶν* after the word *ἀποδώσεις*. This, however, is not mentioned in preference to the reading which our translators followed; but only to shew on how uncertain a foundation Dr. Balguy’s whole system must rest, who could consider a circumstance so frivolous and dubious, as “*clearly and sufficiently pointing out spiritual authority, and distinguishing it from civil.*”

AGAINST this *only* circumstance in the text, and the authority of expositors, which to our astonishment have appeared decisive to the learned writer, it will be sufficient to weigh the general tenor of the instructions

of Christ and his apostles on the head of subjection to human authority. In matters of a *civil* and merely temporal concern, obedience and subjection thereto are frequently enjoined ; in those of a *spiritual* nature, they are not only *unenjoined*, but absolutely *forbidden*. In *these*, to Jesus Christ *alone* is obedience ever represented as due. Even his own ministers, the apostles, who acted under his immediate *commission*, claimed it not to themselves.

YET there are not wanting directions to Christians, respecting their duty towards their spiritual instructors. At the seventh verse of this very chapter from which the Doctor has chosen the subject of his discourse, we meet with two directions on this head. But neither of them point out *obedience* and *subjection* to be the due of such rulers as are there referred to. “ REMEMBER *them* “ *which have the rule over you, who have* “ *spoken unto you the word of God : whose* “ FAITH FOLLOW, *considering the end of* “ *their conversation.*” These faithful dispensers of the word of God were well worthy of kind *remembrance* and a careful *imitation* from their hearers, whose *masters*, however, they were not, that they should be *obeyed*. But the rulers referred to in the 17th verse are considered by the apostle as entitled

entitled to *obedience* and *submission*; a circumstance which clearly points out civil authority, and distinguishes it from spiritual. Nor is the reason assigned for our subjection incompatible with the supposition, that the apostle speaks here of civil authority. On the contrary, it is assigned with great consistency and propriety. We are to obey our civil governors, because they *watch for* [*ὑπερ*, over] *us, as they that must give an account*; that is, those who are placed in authority over us exercise that authority in our own behalf. It is to our advantage and not detriment, that they are entrusted with it; and they are bound to use it to this end, being themselves under authority, and having their superiors in the state to whom they are accountable for the discharge of their office in the protection and security of our persons and properties: Or, it may be, the apostle refers here to the care these rulers were appointed by the state to exercise more particularly over *Christians*, to observe and inspect narrowly their conduct, to watch and *keep guard*, *ἀγρυπνοῦσιν*, over this new sect, whose behaviour they were to report to the higher powers, and were answerable for any disturbance they might occasion, and mal-practices they might be guilty of against the state. But in whichever of these two ways we may understand the reason assigned

assigned by the apostle for the obedience and submission of those to whom he writes, it is far from being inapplicable to his design of admonishing them of the duty they owe to their *civil* governors.

* *Either church.*] How could our author expect to find Dr. *Balguy's* description of a Church in agreement with any of the descriptions given of a *Christian* church?—The doctor acknowledges, that in what he hath said of church-authority he hath considered a church, as an institution *merely human*. Neither the Christian church in general, therefore, nor a Christian church in particular, was necessary to be described. The marks and characters of either would only have encumbered his plan, and served to expose its *beterogeneous* mixture.

3 *A circumstance of no moment.*] The passage in Dr. *Balguy's* sermon here referred to stands thus — “ It will be urged, perhaps, that I have considered a Church as an institution *merely human*; whereas the *Christian* church derives its authority from God.—This will be readily admitted: but the Divinity of its origin is a circumstance of *no moment* in the present enquiry.” True; this circumstance is

is of no moment in the *present enquiry*; that is to say, as it is conducted by the Preacher. But then another objection lies against all that has been urged in the sermon; which is, that the *present enquiry* is itself of *no moment* to the church of *England*, as part of the *Christian* church. We want not to know our rights and duties in our merely civil and political capacities, what submission is due to them *that have the rule over us*, and what rights belong to them, considered as presiding over a *merely human* institution; but in what relation the church and its governors stand to each other, considered, both of them, as members of the *Christian* church, and acknowledging the *Divine* original and authority of scripture. The enquiry, pursued without any regard to this circumstance, concerns us not as *Christians*, but as *subjects*; and is, in fact, an enquiry into the nature and extent of *civil* and *political* authority, not of *spiritual*, to which, however, the archdeacon supposeth his text to refer, and in respect of which he proposed to give, in his discourse, *an accurate description of our rights and duties*, in vain, he tells us, sought for in scripture itself.

4 *Every form of religion, &c.*] In making this extract, our author has wanted his usual

usual accuracy. This is observed in justice to Dr. *Balguy*, who doth not *assert*, that “ every form of religion requires attention “ and study in those who are to teach it.” He is speaking of the advantages which may be obtained by committing the offices of religion to some certain persons. Among other advantages attending a designation of particular persons, is mentioned the following one, *viz.* that “ they [the offices] “ are much more likely to be performed as “ they *ought* to be. This at least,” it is added, “ must be true *under every form of* “ religion, that *requires* attention and study “ in those who are to teach it.”

5 Nor will he give, &c.] Dr. *Balguy*'s words are—“ No man *will* give his time to “ the public, unless excited by public re- “ wards: No man *can* give his *whole* time, “ without exposing himself to want and “ ruin.”—It is not to be doubted, however, that in the first ages of Christianity *many* men gave their time, and no small portion of it too, to the public for this valuable purpose, *unexcited* thereto by public rewards. Nor are we without instances, in these latter times, of our religion being most ably defended, its doctrines rationally explained, and its precepts warmly and forcibly recommended by men who were in-
fluenced

fluenced by no mercenary views, who for their valuable labours of this kind, neither enjoyed any public emoluments, nor entertained expectations of any other rewards than those which accompany willing and gratuitous endeavours to serve the cause of true religion. The reader will anticipate some of the following names, so justly celebrated, and all worthy to be mentioned and remembered with esteem—*Locke, Sir Isaac Newton, Sir Peter King, Milton, Addison, Steel, Littleton, West, Collet.*

‘ *Consistent and uniform.*] It is really astonishing how weakly, and how discreditably for the protestant cause, this same outward consistency and uniformity in religion is praised and pleaded for by the modern advocates for church-authority. Here it is recommended as being of the *highest* importance to the interests of religion. Surely our preacher would do well to consider, that religion was *most* consistent and uniform in its outward appearance, when its native influence on the understandings and hearts of men was *most* obstructed by the corruptions of the church of *Rome*. *External* uniformity in religious worship, so much the boast of that church, is, and can only be, the effect of an *implicit* obedience to human authority. Where the right to private judgement

judgement is asserted, and while men continue to be men, that is to say, fallible beings, religion in its outward appearance will not be uniform. It was the assertion of this right which broke the *uniformity* of the church at the reformation, and has introduced such a *variety* of external modes of worship. Yet, which is of the *highest* importance to the *real* interests of religion; uniformity in its outward appearance, (which imposition on the consciences of men can alone effect) or the exercise of private judgement, (which admits not of such an uniformity) can be no question with a consistent protestant.

BUT “without uniformity,” says the Doctor, “public institutions can never obtain their full effect.” *Public institutions* are here ambiguously used. But will it be affirmed, that the religion *publicly instituted* by Christ and his apostles may not have its genuine effect upon the minds and conduct of its professors, without this *external* uniformity? — Surely not.

IT is further urged in behalf of uniformity, that “doubt and discord are the inevitable consequences of *dissension*.” If by *dissension* is meant (what should be meant in this place) want of uniformity, nothing
can

can be less true than the above assertion. Persons may chuse to be *uniform* in the outward appearance of religion, who yet may entertain much *doubt* of the truth and excellency of the doctrines they profess. But so far is doubt from being an inevitable *consequence* of dissent from the mode of religion established in any community, that it is generally the *cause* of that dissent. Nor is it more true that *discord* is an inevitable consequence of the want of external uniformity in religion : The papists excepted, who of all those that dissent from the mode of religious worship established in this country, are, in *consequence* of that dissent, the more troublesome and factious members of the community.—Nay, discord and dissension, it is but too well known, have been the *consequence* of attempting to enforce this same uniformity in the outward appearance of religion; and concord and unanimity have been happily experienced to result from every act of indulgence shewn to *protestants* in the exercise of their various modes of religious worship.

“ EITHER,” the Doctor further observes,
 “ the variety of religious forms, shakes and
 “ subverts the belief of all religion ; or the
 “ warmth of opposition, whilst it kindles
 “ mens zeal, suppresses and stifles every
 “ other

“ other virtue.”—On the former of these observations it will be sufficient to remark, that there is not the least proof here adduced of the effect attributed to this variety in the outward appearance of religion. And the probability is on the other hand; *viz.* that the permitting the members of any community to worship God—every sect in its own way—will not shake and subvert the belief of *all* religion, but rather tend to promote and confirm the *true*, while it is a trial indeed upon *all* religion. As to the latter observation, that “ the warmth of “ opposition suppresses and stifles every virtue,” if it be a just one, is it not the strongest argument possible against rigorously insisting upon an external uniformity in religion?—For, *this* it is which causeth that warmth of opposition complained of. While every sect enjoys, and is protected by government in the exercise of its own mode of worship, there is no foundation for opposition: And in that case, if “ mens “ zeal be kindled,” it can exert itself in no way that will be prejudicial to the interests of religion and morality, or troublesome to civil government.—See this subject more largely discussed in answer to Letters concerning Confessions of Faith, &c. Part iii. p. 9—26. Newbery, 1769.

⁷ — *All church-authority should be under the controul of the civil governor.*] It is the duty of the civil governor, not only himself to forbear exercising any dominion over conscience, but also to protect his subjects from the attempts of others to lord it over their consciences. For this end alone, *viz.* the protection of the subject against any unjust claims of church-authority, it is that church-authority should be under the controul of the civil governor. But then the civil governor, who is to frame his public conduct by the laws of the community, should himself be under the controul of *such* laws as are calculated to support, not to infringe the rights of conscience: In other words, conscience ought not to be under the controul of either our *civil*, or *ecclesiastical* governors; it should be perfectly *free*, and that freedom secured to every member of the community by *law*.

⁸ *Not the BEST but the LARGEST sect will naturally demand the protection of the magistrate.*] But why should not *both* of them receive the protection of the magistrate?—If the *largest* “ will naturally demand” it, the *best* will surely *deserve* it. And should not *merit* weigh more with the magistrate, than *numbers*?—To speak the
L plain

plain truth, Dr. *Balguy* ought to be ashamed of the principle on which he limits the protection of the magistrate. Not only is the *best*, equally with the *largest sect*, entitled thereto, but every *individual* hath a *natural* and unalienable right to the same.

‘ *That authority once ESTABLISHED must be OBEYED.*] If this be true, how shall we vindicate the reformation from popery?—The authority of the church of *Rome* was once established in these kingdoms. Ought it to have been *obeyed*?—It ought; and “ those that resisted it, resisted the ordinance of God, and received unto themselves damnation,” if what the Doctor alledges be true, that the founders of our religion are in this one point clear and explicit, that authority once *established* must be *obeyed*. But it is *not* true; so far from it, that in this one point, *viz.* of subjection to human authority in the matter of religion, the founder of our faith is clear and explicit, that such authority ought neither to be *established* nor *obeyed*. “ Be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your father which is in heaven.”

‘ *An unbeliever in MANY of those articles.*]

cles.] Why should Dr. *Balguy* lye under this imputation?—Who has any business with his sincerity or insincerity in subscribing the 39 articles?—This concerns *himself* greatly; but it concerns himself *only*. “I would not myself,” says our author, “affirm this,” [that the doctor is a *non-believing* subscriber.] No: That would have been very unlike our author’s candid turn of mind, as well as the decency and good manners with which *his own* remarks are always made. Yet I cannot help wishing he had forbore to suggest the suspicion of any *other* person on this head. And upon what does the writer here cited ground his charge? Why truly, upon his own opinion of Dr. *Balguy*’s good sense. “I have,” saith he, “so good an opinion of Dr. *Balguy*’s good sense, as to think it is a thousand to one, but that he himself is an unbeliever in *many* of those articles.” How weak!—How arrogant!—Has the archdeacon actually expressed any dissatisfaction with the articles to which he has subscribed?—Has he betrayed any symptoms of the insincerity of which he is here accused, by any refinement upon the nature and end of subscription, or by a forced and ambiguous construction of any particular articles?—If he has, his *considerer* would not have done amiss, nor taken an unjustifiable liberty with

him, in pointing out the instances. But nothing of this kind appears in the sermon. It is the preacher's *good sense* only which makes this vast odds of a *thousand to one* against his honesty in subscribing. In short, this writer sits in judgement upon Dr. Balguy and the *English* clergy in general, with the like self-sufficiency that deists and infidels usually exhibit in judging the professors of Christianity. Possessed of great *good sense* themselves, and measuring other men's understandings by their own, with *them* it is a *thousand to one* but that every man of *good sense* is an unbeliever in *many* articles of that religion.

R E M A R K S

On N° II.

" *One third of the 39 Articles of the church of England?—*] A most invidious question this indeed! But I am persuaded the heavy charge against the clergy of the church of *England*, which it implies, and is meant to set forth, will hurt our accuser, on a *just* reflection upon it, much more than we may suffer in the esteem of *candid* men, through any credit that will be given to

to his representation. Dr. *Priestley* has an undoubted right to *his own thoughts* of the established clergy, and the system of faith and doctrine to which they are required to subscribe. To point out too, and expose any defects in the latter, and to admonish, and exhort with any of the former, who may stand *convicted* of certain gross inconsistencies with the solemn profession they made at the time of subscribing, is not any unjustifiable liberty. For this may be done with candour, with decency, and with some advantage to the cause of truth and reformation. But to charge us (at least, to insinuate such a charge) with *not believing*, if we read and think *at all*, *one third* of what we have solemnly subscribed, is more than uncandid and indecent; it is to *de-tract* from our good name; it is to judge us too in a matter on which *man's* judgement ought not to be given. We are moreover, from the very nature of such a charge, precluded from pleading to it, though we may be perfectly innocent. Conscience may acquit us of insincerity to *ourselves*, but it cannot be *produced* in evidence of our sincerity.

If Dr. *Priestley* had expressed only *his own* thoughts of us in this place, and told us that *he* “supposed us not to believe one

“ third of the 39 articles,” *uncandid* and *illiberal* still he must have been accounted, but clear of the *injustice* of representing the generality of dissenters as harbouring the like uncharitable opinion of us. — “ *Who among the clergy, that read and think at all, are supposed to believe one third of the thirty-nine articles of the church of England?* ” — Questions of this kind are not asked for the sake of information. But I shall leave the doctor to pick out what information he can on the subject from the two following extracts from a pamphlet *, which I have perused with great pleasure; and which fully proves, that freedom of sentiment in religion, and of speech also, is perfectly consistent with a regard to decency in remarking upon the establishment, and judging its professors.

Mr. Taylor, being asked at his ordination, *his opinion of the dissenting interest, and his reasons for engaging in the ministry among the dissenters*, to his opinion freely given adds — “ But though I profess myself a

* The Duties of religious societies considered, in a sermon preached at the ordination of the Rev. PHILIP TAYLOR, at *Liverpool*, June 21st — And of the Rev. ROBERT GORE, at *Manchester*, August 23d, 1770. By the Rev. WILLIAM ENDFIELD; with an ADDRESS, &c. London: Printed for J. Johnson, 1770.

“ hearty friend to the dissenting interest; I
 “ cannot, however, omit the present op-
 “ portunity of declaring, that I do by no
 “ means approve the conduct of those of
 “ *my own persuasion*, who take a malicious
 “ pleasure in continually exposing the de-
 “ fects of the religion of their coun-
 “ try, and *in pouring out uncharitable cen-*
 “ *sures against those* who support and de-
 “ fend it. Such a conduct as this, I am
 “ persuaded, can answer no good purpose.
 “ Whilst I enjoy the advantages of a tole-
 “ ration; whilst I am permitted without
 “ molestation to worship God in the man-
 “ ner I most approve; I shall think my-
 “ self bound by the laws of candour, of
 “ moderation, and even of gratitude, to
 “ refrain from saying, or doing any thing
 “ which may give *unnecessary* offence to the
 “ professors of that system of religion,
 “ which the laws of this kingdom have
 “ countenanced and established.”

ANOTHER respondent on a like occa-
 sion *, to his sentiments concerning the
 protestant dissenters, delivered with equal
 freedom, adds—“ Nevertheless, I am sen-
 “ sible that these matters may appear in a

* Mr. Gore.

“ different light to others of my fellow-
 “ christians. To them I willingly allow
 “ that liberty, which I take myself. Nor
 “ am I afraid or ashamed to profess, that I
 “ highly disapprove of the conduct of
 “ *those*, who are continually inveighing
 “ against establishments in general, and
 “ *drawing odious comparisons between the*
 “ *members of the church of England*
 “ *and the Dissenters.* I am well persuad-
 “ ed, that they greatly injure the cause
 “ they mean to serve; and that their con-
 “ duct in these respects will answer no
 “ better end, than laying a foundation for
 “ enmity and uncharitableness amongst
 “ different parties of Christians. Whilst
 “ I am permitted to worship God accord-
 “ ing to the dictates of my own consci-
 “ ence, and publicly to avow my religious
 “ sentiments, I shall account myself hap-
 “ py; nor shall I ever think *meanly*, or *un-*
 “ *charitably*, of those, who can conscien-
 “ tiously subscribe to articles of faith. I
 “ *entertain not the least doubt, that there*
 “ *are MANY such.*”

R E M A R K S

On N^o III.

¹² *So far only as she determines agreeable to the word of God.*] What doth such a determination as this amount to?—Or, how can the church determine on any point for her members, under such a restriction?—Is *she* the only proper judge of what is agreeable to the word of God?—Or, hath not her members a right to judge, each for himself?—If she may determine for her members, what is agreeable to the word of God, there is an end to the right of private judgement. On the other hand; if every one of her members may judge for himself, what is agreeable to the word of God, then he may judge for himself, whether the church hath determined *so far only as is agreeable to the word of God*. And if he has a right to do this—to *judge* of the determinations of the church respecting religion,—he has a right to *act* agreeably to his own judgement; without which a right to private judgement can have no meaning, nor be properly reckoned any privilege to him. It follows, that he has a right to acquiesce in, or to deviate from the determinations of the church,
just

just so far as *he* may judge them to be agreeable or disagreeable to the word of God. In other words, the church hath not a right of determining *at all* for her members, in the matter of religion. Her determinations may be *agreeable to the word of God*; but, though they should be so, the requiring submission to them is nevertheless unwarranted by the same word of God.

13 *The judgement of society.*] I differ much from our author in regard to the *propriety* with which the writer here quoted has expressed himself. The judgement of *the church* (for *her* right to determine for her members is the point in question) is changed for, the judgement of *society*. Such inaccuracies (I am willing to consider this as a mere inaccuracy) sometimes entirely shift the question, and are always apt to mislead or confuse the less cautious and discerning reader.

14 *A judgement of discretion, or opinion.*] If we admit this difference between these rights, their coincidence in any other respect is not worth the mentioning. The judgement of *society* [the church] being a judgement of *authority*, let the determinations thereof be ever so absurd or iniquitous, they

they must be obeyed. For "OBEDIENCE
 "and AUTHORITY are reciprocal terms. A
 "right in another to rule over us, and a duty
 "in us to submit ourselves, are but one and
 "the same thing differently expressed." *
 It is true, "our thoughts are free, and our
 private judgement cannot be excluded by
 the decisions of any authority upon earth."
 But, private judgement being *no more* than
 a judgement of discretion or opinion, we
 cannot avail ourselves of it to any good
 purpose, nor exert it in action; and our
 thoughts being free can serve us but to
 brood over our religious thralldom. Our
 author had certainly lost sight of his own
 principles, when he exhibited the observa-
 tions contained in this citation, as solid and
 just, or favourable to the rights of private
 judgement. To preserve a consistency in
 abetting the cause of religious liberty, it
 is necessary, that we avoid viewing the sen-
 timents of an author by the light in which
 he is held up to the public by persons in
 authority. It seems to have been thought
 a recommendation of the passage we are
 considering, that the writer of it was *well*
esteemed by a late METROPOLITAN for his
 abilities in controversial divinity.

* Dr. BALGUY's sermon preached at *Lambeth-Chapel*,
 &c. published by order of the Archbishop, p. 1. *Davis* and
Reymers, 1769.

“ Only to forms and circumstantials, and matters of discipline.]—It is observed above by this same writer, that “ the church hath a right of determining, *so far only as she determines agreeably to the word of God.*” And may not her determinations *in matters of discipline*, be contrary to the word of God?—They may. The determinations of the church of *Rome* on that head are many of them grossly so. It is not, therefore, a just distinction, which is here made between *matters of doctrine, and matters of discipline*, by way of fixing the proper object of church-authority; and the truth is, the church hath not a right to determine for members *at all* what is, or is not agreeable to the word of God. That must ever be left to a man’s own judgement and conscience. What the author of the *confessional* has remarked on this subject deserves great attention.—“ There is not,” he observes, “ a word in the whole controversy concerning *church-authority* of a looser and more equivocal signification than the word *discipline*. *Rites and ceremonies* are reckoned by some writers among the articles of *discipline*. And yet *rites and ceremonies* may be *idolatrous*. *Tests and subscriptions* are considered by others, under the notion of *discipline*; and thus the magistrate, upon the principles of the alliance,

alliance, [the church, upon the principles of the Rev. *W. Jones*] may have the power of *altering* doctrines. Bp. *Hoadley's* state of the case prevents confusion. Wherever conscience is concerned, whether in matters of doctrine or discipline, there all lawgivers or judges, Christ alone excepted, are excluded." See *Conf. 3d edit. page 61 of Preface to the first edition.*

R E M A R K S

On N^o IV.

¹⁶ *I command thee, unclean spirit, &c.]* This form of exorcism *now* shocks us. But is there not, in the office of ordination, a certain form retained at this day, which (in regard of the *power* assumed by the person who useth it) would appear equally shocking, were it contemplated without any bias upon the judgement from the sanction of human authority?—

¹⁷ *As if Christ should speak the words out of heaven.]* His grace the late archbishop of *Canterbury*, in his INSTRUCTIONS to candidates for orders, observes, that, in uttering these words,—*Whose sins THOU dost forgive they are forgiven: And whose, &c.*—
the

the bishop doth not “ pretend to grant *all* “ the powers, which the Apostles had in “ this respect.” Is *any* power then, I would ask, pretended to be granted to the candidate in this respect, *viz.* of retaining and forgiving sins?—His grace mentions two instances of the efficacy of these words, when pronounced by the bishop. “ When “ we use them, they give you, first, an “ *assurance* that, according to the terms of “ that gospel, which you are to preach, “ men shall be pardoned, or condemned.” But do not those words give *equal* assurance, whether they be pronounced by a *bishop*, a *deacon*, or even a *layman*?—This is no proof of *any* power being given to the priest of *retaining* or *forgiving* sins. “ Secondly,” says his grace, “ they give you “ a right of inflicting ecclesiastical censures “ for a shorter or longer time, and of taking them off; which in regard to external communion, is *retaining* or *forgiving* “ *offences.*” But is it *retaining* or *forgiving* SINS?—Is the taking off an ecclesiastical censure, which had been inflicted, for instance, upon an adulterer, to forgive the man his SIN?—Surely not!—God *alone* forgiveth SIN, and he forgiveth it through the man Christ Jesus *alone*, and of the same assurance is given, and that, to *all* Christians, by the gospel alone.—See *An ANSWER*

to *Letters concerning Confessions of Faith, &c.* Part III. page 82, 83.—1769.

¹⁸ *Nor their act should be of any force.]* If this be so, what benefit doth a person so absolved receive?—He cannot receive any comfort from the act of the minister, unless he himself be sincerely repentant; the act being, in that case, confessedly of no force. On the other hand, if he be repentant, and trust in the mercy of God, he is absolved already *without* the minister's act, who, in that case, hath no power to retain the man's sins by forbearing to pronounce the sentence of absolution. Hence it appears, that the form of absolution which is in our office for the *visitation of the sick*, is not calculated for administering any *true Christian* comfort to the sick person, while it may lead him to depend, for the forgiveness of his sins, upon something *beside* the mercy of God in *Christ Jesus*.

¹⁹ *To every thing there is a season, &c.]* Yes; and to some things there is *always* a season. And can our author speak in such high terms of the present age, as being so *enlightened* in comparison of the times of *Cranmer*, and yet doubt of the fitness of the season for the purpose of reformation?—Why talk of *submitting to the wisdom of our gover-*

governors, as to the PROPER TIME for dismissing these encroachments upon Christian liberty?—If the requiring subscription to human articles of faith be really an *encroachment* upon Christian liberty, it will be an act of *justice* in our governors (what is here meekly stiled an act of *honourable indulgence*) to their subjects, to dismiss it; and for acts of this kind the *present* is surely the *proper* time. However, be this the *due* of their subjects, or only an *indulgence* to them, it is the part and duty of those who think it either, to *apply* for it, and a great impeachment of their *sense*, as well as of their *zeal* for the cause of reformation, to wait, without suit, the *offer* of it from government.

R E M A R K S

On N° V.

2° *It is allowed on all hands, &c.*] But, “all the world knows,” says a most ingenious writer, “the creed which goes under the name of the Apostles, was never penned by any of the Apostles. The learned Dr. Sykes has proved that one of its articles was not inserted till the fourth century.”—And he adds, “For my own part I shall make no scruple to
“ assert,

“ assert, that it contains several gross in-
 “ accuracies.” *

“ *And so carefully transmitted, &c.*] But,
 “ it was rather too *hasty* a step taken by
 “ them, to draw up a system of doctrines
 “ which should tie down the belief of
 “ their fellow-protestants to the precise
 “ measure and dimension of their own ;
 “ and especially so as to *include posterity* also
 “ in the strait inclosure.” Vid. *supra*,
 N° IV. p. 93.

“ *Subscribe in any other sense whatever.*] But if a subscriber to the articles is to interpret the articles *by scripture*, how are they *explanatory* of scripture ?—And what satisfaction do our governors receive from us, when we subscribe, that we hold the true doctrine of scripture, if subscription be not the test of our interpreting scripture, by the sense given of it in the articles subscribed ?—“ Whatever,” says our author, “ is the *true original* sense of scripture “ herein” [the doctrine of *predestination*, for instance] “ THAT must in course, and

* *Remarks upon the second and third of three Letters against the CONFSSIONAL*, page 37.—London : Printed for E. and C. Dilly, in the Poultry, 1768.

“ in all reason and equity, be the sense in
 “ which I am to subscribe the article pro-
 “ posed.”—If this be the true light in which
 we are to view the *nature* and *obligation* of
 subscription, what objection could be made
 to subscribing any *popish* article of faith,
Transubstantiation, Purgatory, &c. ?—I am
 not to subscribe these articles in *any other*
sense whatever, than the true original sense
 of *scripture* herein. The sense of the *ar-*
ticles may be quite *contrary* to the true ori-
 ginal sense of *scripture*. With the true
 sense of the *articles*, however, I have no
 concern, but with the sense of *scripture*
 therein. And if this be all the obligation
 which subscribers to human articles of faith
 come under, with what propriety and con-
 sistency doth our author call subscription to
 them an *encroachment on Christian liberty*,
 and plead so earnestly for *dismissing* it, as
 such ?—(N° IV. p. 102.)

“ *What will be the consequences?*] The
 conversion of the Christian ministry into a
 political priesthood.

R E M A R K S

On N^o VI.

²⁴ *A proper note*] Well worthy the particular attention of Dr. *Balguy*, and his antagonist, Dr. *Priestly*, and by which both of them may greatly profit. And I cannot but wonder, that our author, in remarking upon Dr. *Balguy*, should not have availed himself more than he has done, of the *judgement* and *caution*, as well as candour and moderation, with which this note is penned. “An attempt after all,” speaking of a reform of our ecclesiastical establishment, “it must be confessed, it is of no
 “very flattering aspect with regard to the
 “secular views of a member of the church.
 “This is indeed so evident, that it might
 “be expected that every candid judge would
 “naturally ascribe it to a just emulation to
 “discharge one’s duty, with a conscience
 “void of offence towards God and men, and
 “a calm contempt for every other ambition.
 “A concurrence, it seems, of certain
 “circumstances may disqualify a man from
 “seeing it in so favourable a light. Should
 “a person,” continues this polite remarker,

“ so situated affect to question the con-
 “ sistency of such an attempt with *the*
 “ *principles of justice and honour* ;—he may
 “ be questioned in his turn, whether it
 “ would be more *just and honourable* for a
 “ sincere, though perhaps over-scrupulous
 “ conformist, *to renounce all communion at*
 “ *once, and declare open war, as an alien,*
 “ with that church; which upon the whole
 “ he infinitely prefers to all others, which
 “ he means to serve with his best abilities,
 “ tho’ *without any pretence to inspiration,*
 “ or infallibility, and of whose wisdom he
 “ thinks too reverently, to suppose it un-
 “ willing to accept the most essential ser-
 “ vice of any hand, but that of a professed
 “ adversary. V. Sermon preached at the
 “ consecration of the Bishop of *Landaff*,
 “ by Dr. *Balguy*, archdeacon of *Winchester*,
 “ p. 20.

“ How far the censure, in the passage
 “ here alluded to, was meant to be extended
 “ by the respectable writer, it is not easy to
 “ guess. An intrepid but too precipitate
 “ champion for the dissenters, (Dr. *Priestly*)
 “ inveighs *outrageously* against it, as expressive
 “ of the genuine sense and spirit of our
 “ church-establishment in particular, and in-
 “ deed of all establishments in general. If
 “ after

“ after all we may be permitted to understand
 “ this passage, (as perhaps the worthy wri-
 “ ter himself intended it,) as directing its
 “ whole force against those only, whose
 “ capricious and disorderly conduct really
 “ defeats every good purpose of uniting in
 “ a religious community; its consistency
 “ with the amiable principles of modera-
 “ tion, which he has publicly professed
 “ upon other occasions, will be the more
 “ indisputable. Unluckily it is supposed
 “ equally to strike at those, who with all
 “ due humility claim a right of examining
 “ into the merit and propriety of those
 “ established regulations, to which they
 “ in the mean time punctually, though
 “ not implicitly submit.—So at least his
 “ expert antagonist is pleased to understand
 “ it, without which it might well defy the
 “ keenest edge of his argument or in-
 “ vective.”

“ Concerning the dropping of subscriptions,
 &c.] A writer of *Three Letters to the Author
 of the Confessional* makes the hackneyed ob-
 jection against dropping subscription to *hu-
 man* articles of faith, and subscribing to the
 scriptures as the only rule of faith, (the
 proposal made in the confessional) *viz.* that
popish teachers and *fanatics* would in that
 case find an opportunity of getting into
 M 3 the

the church and venting their wild notions. In answer to this it is judiciously observed by the *remarker*, “ that no popish priest can submit to the proposal made in the *confessional*, of subscribing to the scriptures as a full, perfect, absolute, and compleat rule of faith, without making at the same time a solemn renunciation of popery. As to *fanatical* preachers,” continues he, “ I beg leave to ask, whether subscribing to the 39 articles has ever, or doth at present exclude any of them from our pulpits?—I would also ask him, whether there are no *other* wild notions besides such as are condemned by the articles of the church of *England*?—But to be a little more particular, there are two kinds of enthusiasts : The one is to be met with in every age, and seems to be composed of men of a warm imagination, strong passions, and little or no judgement. Whatever such men take in hand they always consider it as a matter of the greatest importance. When religion is the object of their attention, we generally find them laying hold of some tenet that will afford them an opportunity of exercising the powers of the imagination. Men of this stamp are to be found in every denomination : And the sources of such an enthusiasm
“ are

“ are so numerous, that the proposing of
 “ confessions of faith as an expedient to
 “ get rid of them, shews about as much
 “ wisdom as if a man were to make a pro-
 “ posal for containing the *Thames* in a blad-
 “ der. Had *Molinos* been a member of
 “ the church of *England*, in all probability
 “ he would have written the *Serious Call*.
 “ But there is another species of enthu-
 “ siasts, that rarely make their appearance
 “ in civilized countries; but are the off-
 “ spring of ignorance and barbarism.
 “ Active, and intrepid, they dream dreams,
 “ and see visions. Favoured with imme-
 “ diate illuminations from heaven, they
 “ soar above the vulgar rules of morality,
 “ and sanctifying the means by the end,
 “ omit nothing to compleat their designs.
 “ Against such kind of men what would
 “ subscriptions avail?—The eternal salva-
 “ tion of mankind is concerned—He is
 “ the anointed prophet of the almighty—
 “ His commission is supernatural—To him
 “ subscriptions to articles established by
 “ human authority, are like chaff before
 “ the wind. From hence we may discern
 “ the inutility of them in both cases. In
 “ the former case we have an evil, against
 “ which we must seek for relief in the
 “ principles of legislation. If a man be
 “ inspired to commit murder, raise a rebel-
 “ lion,

“ lion, or violate any of the fundamental
 “ laws of society, I know of no other, nor
 “ better remedy, than for the civil magis-
 “ trate, inspired by the *providence of go-*
 “ *vernment*, to punish him according to the
 “ *tenor and purport* of such laws.

“ BUT this inquiry into the consequence
 “ of abolishing subscription is not altogether
 “ a matter of speculation, but depends, in
 “ some measure, upon experience. In-
 “ stead then of giving way to the sug-
 “ gestions of fancy, let us follow this slow,
 “ but certain guide, and see how the affair
 “ stands in those churches where subscrip-
 “ tions are never mentioned but with the
 “ utmost contempt.

“ I AM informed, that in the County Pa-
 “ latine of *Lancaster* there are no less than
 “ forty congregations of protestant dissen-
 “ ters. In *Yorkshire* their number may be
 “ double. In all these societies, and many
 “ others in different parts of the kingdom,
 “ their ministers are chosen without any
 “ subscription whatever. And I have not
 “ been able to learn, that one popish priest
 “ is to be found among them. And as to
 “ fanaticism, perhaps no set of men in the
 “ world was ever more free from it. It
 “ were to be wished that the letter-writer
 “ would

“ would condescend to examine things with
 “ a little more accuracy, and argue from
 “ facts ; and not place such an implicit de-
 “ pendance upon the chimeras of his own
 “ brain.”

“ *In the power of the former, &c.*] Our author plainly refers to our *ecclesiastical* governors, in whose power, however, it certainly is *not* to afford us relief in the matter of subscription. It is solely in the power of the *British Parliament* to do this, and it is not improbable, that the farther reformation of our ecclesiastical establishment would have taken place before this time, if the idea of the power of the bishops in this respect had not been industriously magnified, and the absolute necessity of their concurrence at least, in the enterprize, been artfully suggested by those, who are interested to defeat every attempt in favour of religious liberty. “ Let the leading men,” says the very sensible and spirited author of *Remarks upon the First of Three Letters to the Author of the Confessional*, “ begin with
 “ making a *modest*, but *earnest* application
 “ to *Parliament*, setting forth the difficul-
 “ ties under which they labour, and the
 “ injury the protestant religion daily re-
 “ ceives from confessions of faith imposed
 “ by human authority, and let them petition

“ to

“ to be relieved from them. And should
 “ their request be refused (which is not
 “ very probable) let them unite in openly
 “ protesting against extending the subscrip-
 “ tion to any articles, but those that con-
 “ cern the true confession of the Christian
 “ faith, and the due administration of the
 “ Sacraments.

“ WHEN they have so done, the world
 “ will be inclined to believe, that they are
 “ in earnest in their endeavours to promote
 “ religion. But if we take an attentive
 “ view of the state of the times, we shall
 “ find no reason to suppose, that the great
 “ council of the nation would reject any
 “ attempts to reform the church, especi-
 “ ally if such proposals were seconded by
 “ any number of the clergy.”

10²¹ *Tbanby dropping subscriptions altogether, &c.*] PROPOSALS for an application to *Parliament* for relief in the matter of subscription have been lately submitted to the consideration of the *English* clergy *. In consequence of those proposals a meeting of the clergy was requested, and held on the

* Sold by B. White, Fleet-street; E. and C. Dilly, in the Poultry, &c. SEE ADDENDA.

17th of *July* in the present year 1771*, when, as hath been mentioned in the public prints, they were unanimous in their resolutions, and appointed a Committee to draw up a Petition previous to the next general meeting, which is fixed for *Wednesday* the 25th of *September* next ensuing. In a most spirited LETTER † to the Reverend Dr. *James Ibbetson*, from a *Clergyman of the Church of England*, I am particularly pleased to find the *object* of this association publicly avowed, and represented in such a light, as seems sufficient to obviate every cavil and insinuation against the plan, and the projectors and favourers of it: “I will
 “ tell you and all the world”, says this animated advocate for the cause of religious freedom, “that the present union against
 “ *subscription* is directed to that one point
 “ only—that the rational spirits now cemented for that purpose throughout the
 “ nation, mean not to object to the Liturgy, or any part of it—they will apply for relief to that authority which
 “ alone can give it, to that authority, which imposed subscription—and they will apply in the most dutiful manner.—They
 “ wish to be freed from the *unnecessary* bur-

* At the *Feathers Tavern*, in the *Strand*.

† London: Printed for S. Bladen, in *Pater-noster-Row*,

“ then upon the conscience, of *subscribing*
 “ to the truth of all those human propo-
 “ tions which the law obliges them to use ;
 “ and the man, who understands what *pro-*
 “ *testantism* is, will see, that a petition of
 “ such a sort will come with as much pro-
 “ priety from one who believes all that he
 “ subscribes, as from one who has his
 “ doubts.”

OUR request being so reasonable in itself
 — the mode of preferring it being unex-
 ceptionably proper and perfectly legal —
 and determined as we are to shew ourselves
 dutiful and respectful in our address to the
 SUPREME power, what have we to do but
 to wait the issue with a becoming confidence
 in the wisdom and justice of a *British* and
protestant Legislature ; making our suit in
 the mean time to *Him*, in whose rule and
 governance are the hearts of all men, that he
 would so dispose and govern the hearts of
 our rulers, that they may consult *the ad-*
vancement of his glory, the good of his church,
the safety, honour, and welfare of our So-
vereign and his kingdoms ; that all things
may be so ordered and settled by their endea-
vours, upon the best and surest foundations ;
that peace and happiness, truth and justice,
religion and piety may be established among us
for all generations.

T H E E N D.

ADDENDA.

A D D E N D A.

P R O P O S A L S

FOR AN

Application to PARLIAMENT for Relief in the matter of Subscription to the Liturgy and Thirty-nine Articles of the established Church of *England*.

Humbly submitted to the consideration of the learned and conscientious Clergy of the said Church.

GENTLEMEN,

THE case of Subscription to doctrines and forms of worship, composed by fallible divines, and enjoined by human authority for public use, has been so often and so particularly examined and debated, that there seems to be very little room for new information on the subject.

THE

THE principle upon which the Protestant reformation from Popery was undertaken, conducted, and justified, is, that “ Holy
 “ scripture contains all things necessary to
 “ salvation, so that whatsoever is not read
 “ therein, nor may be proved thereby, is
 “ not to be required of any man, that it
 “ should be believed as an article of the
 “ faith, or be thought requisite or necessa-
 “ ry to salvation *.”

CONCERNING what is or is not *read* in the Scriptures, there can be no great difficulty. The point chiefly to be considered by the sincere Protestant, is, what may or

* In the Statutes given by Queen Elizabeth to Trinity College, in the University of Cambridge, the following Oath is appointed to be taken by every Fellow in the Chapel before his admission: “ I, N. N. do swear and promise in the presence of God, that I will heartily and
 “ stedfastly adhere to the true Religion of Christ, and
 “ prefer the Authority of Holy Scripture before the opinions of men, that I will make the word of God the
 “ Rule of my Faith and Practice—and look upon other
 “ things which are not proved out of the word of God
 “ as Human only. That I will readily with all my power
 “ oppose doctrines contrary to the word of God—That
 “ in matters of Religion I will prefer Truth before
 “ Custom—what is written before what is not written.”

*See Introduction to CLARKE'S Scripture
 Doctrine of the Trinity.*

may

may not be *proved* thereby. Concerning which, amidst the great variety of doctrines which occur in the course of every Clergyman's studies, difference of judgement is natural and unavoidable.

ON these disputable points, the original Protestant principle reserves to every man his right of private judgement. In forming this judgement rightly, every man's conscience must be concerned; and if he meets with a doctrine which, after diligent and impartial examination, he believes *may not be proved* by Scripture, his conscience will require him not to subscribe or assent to that doctrine, *as such*.

HAD this been duly considered by our first Protestant reformers (who strenuously and uniformly asserted the right of private judgement, in opposing their Popish adversaries) they would more readily have perceived that the establishment of the doctrines they agreed upon in the year 1552, might, in its consequences, infringe upon that valuable Protestant privilege on which they founded the propriety of their dissenting from the Church of *Rome*, and in the event, derive upon them, and their successors, the reproach of overturning their own principles, and requiring of *their* disciples,

ciples, what they would not suffer him, whom, with respect to a *Primacy of order*, they allowed to be the first Bishop of *Christendom*, to require of *themselves*.

ARCHBISHOP *Cranmer* was no more infallible than Pope *Leo X*. He could not be certain that every man equally learned, and equally honest with himself, would see the scriptural proofs of *his* articles as clearly as he supposed he himself saw them. *Parker*, his Protestant successor, made considerable alterations in *Cranmer's* system. And *Laud*, as every one knows, had his objections to *Parker's*. And through all succeeding times, from the first uniformity-act under Queen *Elizabeth*, to the present hour, there have been leading divines, and among them not a few Bishops, who in their respective works have *occasionally* proved points by Holy Scripture with a masterly precision, which all the wit and learning in the world can never make to agree with some of *Parker's* articles.

THE authority of Synods, Convocations, or other humanly authorised Assemblies of divines, is of no more validity against the Protestant principle (the right of private judgement) than the authority of a *Cranmer*, or a *Parker*. We have the united
testimony,

testimony of both these Reformers, that
 “ General Councils, even when gathered
 “ together by the commandment and will
 “ of Princes, (forasmuch as they be Assem-
 “ blies of men, whereof all be not govern-
 “ ed with the Spirit and Word of God)
 “ may err, and sometimes have erred, even
 “ in things pertaining unto God.” [The
 Latin hath it, *etiam in his quæ ad normam
 pietatis attinent.*] “ Wherefore things or-
 “ dained by them, as necessary to salva-
 “ tion, have neither strength nor authori-
 “ ty, unless it may be declared that they
 “ are taken out of the Holy Scripture.”
 [The Latin says, *nisi ostendi possint e sacris
 literis esse desumpta.*] The premises being
 equally true of national or provincial Sy-
 nods, the conclusion is equally strong
 against them, as against General Councils.
 And the question once more recurs, *Who
 shall be the judge?* The answer of the Pro-
 testant is, *Every man for himself.* My vote
 for a Convocation-man cannot transfer to
 him the right of judging for me. In mat-
 ters of faith and salvation, no man can have
 a Substitute or a Representative.

WE have indeed been told, that the
 Church of England does not propose all
 her articles to be subscribed as points ne-
 cessary to salvation. But one would be
 glad

glad to know where She draws the line, or makes any distinction to this effect. In her XXXVIth Canon she enjoins *all and every of these articles* to be acknowledged *ex animo* and subscribed, as *agreeable to the word of God*. In her Vth Canon she enacts that, “ If any man shall affirm that these articles are, in *any part*, erroneous, he shall be excommunicated *ipso facto*.” That is to say, (as we are informed by her own Canonists) “ accursed, devoted to the Devil, and separated from Christ, and his Church’s communion.” See *Godolphin* Repert. Canon. p. 625, 626. Is this an adequate punishment for those who dissent from her in points *not necessary to salvation*?

It is natural, Gentlemen, to suppose, that you, to whom this paper is addressed, not only see, but inwardly feel the incongruity of requiring of you this implicit subscription, when compared with the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and the general principles of the Protestant reformation. It is highly probable, that you do not find *all* the established doctrines and forms of worship, to which you are obliged by law to subscribe, in perfect agreement with your private sentiments. And where you find they are not, the integrity of your own hearts, and your desire

to

to edify the people committed to you, as public teachers, in truth and sincerity, must dispose you to wish to be delivered from this yoke of bondage, which every honest man, who after an impartial and diligent study of the Scriptures, differs from the public System, must bear with reluctance and regret.

IN our present circumstances, the only attempt we can make to be relieved from this real grievance, is to apply by a decent and dutiful Petition to the Legislature, to have it removed.

OUR Ecclesiastical Governors having declined * to lend their hand towards our obtaining any relief (even the least relaxation

* See, Free and Candid Disquisitions presented and dedicated to our Governors in Church and State; a Letter to Abp. HERRING, in the Year 1754, now made public; &c.—The *open* and *bearty* Concurrence, however, of our present worthy Church-Governors, would doubtless give singular Pleasure to every Friend of religious Liberty, and (it is humbly presumed) be no discredit to themselves.

A REMARKER upon the PROPOSALS hath taunted the worthy Persons who were present at the first Meeting with the *smallness* of their Numbers and their *inconsiderableness* in Station. This is the more to be lamented. Where the reflection lies, must be submitted to a more fair and impartial Public.

of this hard and illiberal condition of our being admitted Ministers in a Christian and Protestant church) on the plea, that the matter is intirely in the hands of the Civil powers, have left us only to hope, that they will not oppose our reasonable and righteous endeavours to help ourselves.

THE only objection that has been made on the part of our Church-Governors (at least the only one worth notice) is, that if the Clergy should be released from their obligation to subscribe to the XXXIX articles, the Church would want sufficient security of the *Orthodoxy* of her Ministers. But *Orthodoxy*, we apprehend, is a term which, in the mouth of a Protestant, should only mean, an agreement in opinion with the Scriptures. And for the proof of such Orthodoxy, sufficient provision seems to be made, in the second question put by the Bishop to every Candidate for Priest's orders, at the time of his ordination *.

THE

* Question. Are you persuaded that the Holy Scriptures contain sufficiently all doctrine required of necessity for eternal Salvation through faith in Jesus Christ? And are you determined, out of the same Scriptures, to instruct the people committed to your charge, and to teach nothing as required of necessity to eternal Salvation, but that which you shall be persuaded may be concluded and proved by the Scripture?

Answer.

THE great difficulty in framing and forwarding a Petition to Parliament for the relief in question, will arise from the dispersion of the Clergy who wish for it, in different and distant parts of the kingdom, who are thereby disabled (at least the major part of them) by low circumstances and other impediments, from meeting together and concerting measures for effecting so desirable a deliverance.

To obviate this, and other inconveniences, which may seem, on a superficial view, to attend an application of this nature, it is humbly proposed,

1. THAT a few worthy and respectable Clergymen, residing in, or within miles of the Metropolis, who are disposed

Answer. I am so persuaded, and have so determined by God's Grace.

We have been lately informed that in some manuscript notes on the Liturgy, &c. intituled, — “ Amendments humbly proposed” [by the late Dr. *Clarke*] “ to the consideration of those in authority,” a Copy of which is presented to the British Museum, the following Query is put at the Head of the 39 articles. “ Would it not be of service to religion, if all Clergymen, instead of subscribing to the 39 articles, were required to subscribe only to the matters contained in the questions put by the Bishop (in the Office for Ordaining Priests) to every person to be ordained Priest ?”

to forward a Petition to Parliament for the purpose abovementioned, shall meet together, and consider of a proper time and place for a General meeting of their like-minded brethren, within the said Metropolis *.

2. THAT previous to the public notice for such General meeting, some eminent counsellor shall be consulted, and requested to give his advice in what manner such General meeting may be procured and conducted without offence, or without infringing the Laws of this country; and particularly, to give his opinion whether the Established clergy (under the degree of Bishops) are solely and singly, of all his Majesty's Subjects, precluded from the right of petitioning Parliament with respect to hardships and grievances attending their particular calling.

3. THAT the plan of a General meeting being thus settled, public notice shall be given of the time and place of assembling.

* Since the first printing of these proposals, a meeting of the Clergy, &c. residing in or near the metropolis, has been advertised for the seventeenth of July.

4. THAT

4. THAT at the first General meeting, such Clergymen being present, as are willing and desirous to forward a petition to Parliament for relief in the matter of Subscription, shall subscribe their names to a paper purporting to be [Qu. association] a list of such Clergymen as are disposed to apply to Parliament for such relief; which paper shall be kept by a proper person for the purpose of being subscribed by any Clergymen who chuse it at any subsequent General meeting, or during the intervals of the General meetings hereafter mentioned: and all persons subscribing their names to the said paper, *and no others*, shall be considered as associated members of, and admitted to consult, speak and vote in the said General meetings.

5. THAT at the first General meeting a Committee shall be chosen out of the associated members by ballot, not exceeding the number of which Committee so chosen, shall chuse a Chairman to preside at their respective meetings, and likewise at each General meeting, and also shall appoint from among themselves such person or persons as may be able and proper to execute the office of Secretary, &c. to the said Committee, and the said General meetings.

ings. This is nevertheless proposed with all deference and submission to the sense of the first General meeting, concerning the manner of electing their Chairman and other persons qualified and proper to act in any capacity for the purposes of continuing, adjourning, and otherwise regulating, such General meetings, and transacting the business thereof, so long as may be necessary.

6. THAT a Petition to Parliament shall be prepared by the said Committee against the second General meeting, setting forth in the most respectful and dutiful terms the hardship, incongruity, and inconvenience of requiring Subscriptions to the present established forms, of the Protestant clergy of this realm, and praying such relief herein as to the wisdom of the Legislature shall seem meet.

7. THAT the draught of this Petition shall be laid before the second General meeting, and submitted to the inspection and judgment of the associated members then present, and such alterations made therein as the major part thereof shall approve.

8. THAT the draught of the Petition
being

being thus approved, shall be fairly engrossed for Subscription, and shall be forthwith printed, and copies thereof sent by the associated members to the Clergy of their acquaintance in the Country respectively, requesting that the said Petition may be communicated to their Neighbours of the Clergy, and the sentiments of as many of their Brethren thereupon as can be had, sent up to their respective correspondents of the association, to be communicated to the General meeting, with power to such correspondents respectively to subscribe the names of so many of the country Clergy, as approve of the proceeding, to the said Petition.

9. THAT to give time for the several answers to be received from the country, the General meetings shall be adjourned from time to time, (the intervals not to exceed fourteen Days) during the space of six [eight or ten] months, after which it may be supposed the sense of so many of the Clergy in different parts of the kingdom as are disposed to join in or forward such Petition, may in a great measure be known.

10. THAT a Book or Books be provided to enter and record the whole proceedings,
as

as well of the General meetings, as of the several Committees, to be deposited hereafter in some public Library or Museum, to perpetuate the memory of so important a transaction, that whatever may be the event, our successors may see, there have not been wanting, among their brethren, men who employed their best endeavours to obtain relief from a grievance by which, it may well be supposed, many more have been distressed for two centuries past, than have been willing to complain.

II. THAT before the expiration of the said six [eight or ten] months, (some worthy member or members of the Honourable House of Commons being prevailed with to present the said Petition) six of the associated members and no more, shall be chosen by ballot at a General meeting to attend the Honourable House with the said Petition, and then the Event submitted to the providence of a good and merciful God, and the wisdom and piety of a Christian and Protestant Legislature, to whom may God in all things give the spirit of understanding and the fear of the LORD through JESUS CHRIST. Amen.

A
SUMMARY VIEW
OF THE
LAWS relating to SUBSCRIPTIONS, &c.
WITH REMARKS,
Humbly offered to the Consideration of the
BRITISH PARLIAMENT.

[A] **I**N the Year 1553, were published by the King's Majesty's authority, "Articles agreed upon by the Bishops and other learned and godly men in the last Convocation at *London*, in the year of our Lord 1552, to root out discord of opinions, and establish the agreement of true religion." Bishop *Sparrow's* Collection of Articles, &c.

Remark.—It is however certain, that these Articles were not agreed upon *in Convocation*. Archbishop *Cranmer's* account of the matter was this. "I was ignorant of the setting to of that title, and as soon as I had knowledge thereof, I did not like it; and when I complained thereof to the Council, it was answered by them, That the Book was so entitled, because it was set forth in the time of the Convocation." *Burnet's Hist. Reform.* Vol. III. p. 210, 211. And *Fox's Martyrology*. — Bishop *Burnet* says, "It seemed to be a great want, that this"[the publication of these Articles]

Articles] “ had been so long delayed, as the “ old Doctrine had still the *legal* authority of “ its side.” What *legal* authority the old Doctrine had, except in the decisions of foreign Canons which were received in this Kingdom with great reservation of municipal Rights, &c. is not clear. The danger of dogmatizing was not unknown in those days, and it would have answered the end of the new Establishment just as well to have enjoined Subscription to the Article cited below in the Remark upon D only.

[B] A Mandate bearing date *June* 19, in the seventh year of the King's reign [1553] was issued, addressed to the Officers of the Archbishop of *Canterbury* [*Cranmer*] (referring to a previous Mandate addressed to the Archbishop himself, and giving him authority to expound, publish, denounce, and signify the said Articles to the King's clergy and people within his jurisdiction) to summon or peremptorily admonish all and singular Rectors, Vicars, Presbyters, Stipendiaries, Curates, Rural Deans, Ministers, Masters of Grammar Schools, public and private Preachers of the Word of God, Lecturers and all who exercised any Ecclesiastical function of whatever denomination, including even Churchwardens, to appear at *Lambeth*, on *Friday* the 23d day of *June*, between the hours of seven and nine, to do

and

and receive what may be farther agreeable to reason, and becometh their duty to the royal dignity. *Burnet's Hist. Reform. vol. III. Collection p. 202.*

Rem. + This Mandate was issued pursuant to a Letter of the Archbishop's to the King and Council, "desiring that all Bishops might have authority from the King to cause all Preachers, Archdeacons, Deans, Prebendaries, Parsons, Vicars, Curates, with all their Clergy, to subscribe the said Articles."—The reason given by the Archbishop for such his desire was, "that he trusted such a concorde and quietness in Religion should shortly follow thereof, as else was not to be looked for of many Years." Probably the good man found this expedient did not answer his expectation. For tho' his Powers by this Mandate were very full, we find him declaring at his Examination before *Weston*, that *he compelled no man to subscribe*. A Declaration that sufficiently shews, he had met with opposition to this measure of *Peace and Quietness*. And most probably it was not only the gentleness of his own disposition, but the consciousness of the incongruity of such compulsion, with the original principles of the Protestant Reformation, which occasioned his Forbearance. This is one instance of those difficulties the first Reformers found in accommodating the new Establishment to the temper of the times consistently with their own Professions of being determined in matters of Faith and Doctrine, by the Scriptures only. It is hardly necessary to observe,

observe, that such Expedients are not only useless now, but highly disparaging to the improvements we pretend to in the present times.

[C] A particular Mandate to the Bishop of *Norwich*, bearing date *June 9*, directing him to cause the said Articles to be subscribed by every manner of person presented unto him to be admitted to any Ecclesiastical Order, Ministry, Office, or Cure within his Diocese, and if any man in that case shall refuse to consent to any of the said Articles, and to subscribe the same, then his Majesty willeth and commandeth him the said Bishop, that neither he, nor any for him, or by his procurement in any wise, shall admit such recusant or allow him as sufficient or meet to take any Order, Ministry, or Ecclesiastical Cure. For which his so doing, his Majesty promises to *discharge* the Bishop from all manner of penalties or dangers of actions, suits, or pleas of *Premunire*, *Quare impedit*, or such like. *Burnet*, Ibid. p. 203.

Rem.—Here was a stretch of the Royal Prerogative which the end proposed would hardly justify. It was depriving the subject of the benefit of the Law by an arbitrary *Non obstante*. A writ of *Quare impedit* is a writ of *Right*, and, without the Royal interposition, would have compelled the Bishop to give the Clerk institution,

institution, without some better Reason for denying it, than that the Clerk refused to subscribe these Articles.

[D] A Mandatorial letter from the Bishop of *Ely* (Goodricke) Chancellor, and three more appointed visitors of the University of *Cambridge*, dated *June 1, 1553*, addressed to *Dr. Sands* (probably Vicechancellor) and to the Regents and Non-Regents of the said University, enjoining an oath to be taken and subscribed by every Candidate for a degree in Divinity, or in Arts, containing, among others, the following engagement, *Deinde me Articulos de quibus in Sinodo Londinensi Anno Domini 1553. ad tollendam opinionum dissensionem, et consensum veræ Religionis firmandum inter Episcopos et alios eruditos viros convenerat et Regia Autoritate in lucem editos, pro veris et certis habiturum, et omni in loco tanquam consentientes cum verbo Dei defensurum, et contrarios Articulos in Scholis et Pulpitis vel respondendo vel concionando oppugnaturum.* Burnet, ubi supra, p. 205.

Rem.—In the former part of this oath the Candidate swore, *se veram Christi religionem omni animo complexurum, Scripturæ authoritatem Hominum judicio præpositurum, regulam vitæ et summam fidei ex verbo Dei petiturum. Cætera quæ ex verbo Dei non probantur, pro humanis et non necessariis habiturum.* It was utterly inconsistent

sistent with the man's professing these things, to assert, that he would esteem these Articles for true and certain, and to defend them as such against all mankind, upon the mere presumption that they were agreeable to the word of God.

[E] Upon Queen Elizabeth's accession, an Act of Uniformity passed, wherein is no mention made of Subscription either to the Liturgy established by that Act or to any Articles of Religion, nor in the visitatorial Articles of Inquiry of the same year, is there any one intimating that such Subscription was required. See *Sparrow's Collection*.

Rem.—It is remarkable that by this Statute, the Clergyman offending against it, is to be lawfully convicted according to the Laws of this Realm, by verdict of twelve men, or by his own confession, or by the notorious evidence of the fact; and was not left solely to the Bishop or Ordinary either for his trial or his punishment; and as the words “and be thereof in form afore said lawfully convict,” or words equivalent, run through the whole Act, it was manifestly the intention of the Parliament to put the inferior Clergy on the footing of the rest of the free Subjects of the Realm, and not leave them to the arbitrary censures of their respective Ordinaries, as these were too apt to encroach upon the civil powers, by exercising their

their jurisdiction, where the laws of the Realm should have restrained them, complaints of which were frequently made in Parliament, during this reign, and particularly with respect to Subscription, as will be seen by and by. N. B. There is one instance of a trial by Jury upon this Statute, before Lord Chief Justice Catlin, Bishop Sandys, &c. preserved in a Book, called *Part of a Register*, &c. p. 105. The Culprit was one *Robert Johnson*, Preacher at *Northampton*. He was indicted for administering the wine at the Communion without the words of Consecration, for marrying without the Ring, and baptizing without making the Sign of the Cross. He was convicted of the first offence, sentenced to suffer a year's imprisonment, and died in the Gate-house before the end of the year, viz. 1573. In the course of the Trial, and from the circumstances of *Johnson's* Defence, some points of Doctrine were discussed, and *Johnson* was said to defend a horrible Herefy, which was probably the chief inducement with the Jury to find him Guilty. For the Fact, as *Johnson* shewed, was not against the Order of the Book. Subscription was hotly urged this year. But *Johnson's* notion of the words of Institution, was not provided against in the Articles.

[F] IN the year 1562. King Edward's Articles were revised, and altered, some things added, others taken away, and the number reduced to thirty-nine. At the end of which, is the following Ratifica-
 O tion.

tion. "This Book of Articles before rehearsed, is again approved, and allowed to be holden and executed within the realm, by the assent and consent of our Sovereign Lady *Elizabeth*, by the Grace of God of *England, France and Ireland* Queen, Defender of the Faith, &c. Which Articles were deliberately read, and confirmed again by the Subscription of the hands of the Archbishop and Bishops of the upper House, and by the Subscription of the whole Clergy of the nether House in their Convocation in the year of our Lord 1571."

Rem.—The Latin Articles of 1562, differ very much from those [Latin] Articles published by Convocation in 1571. It is probable there was the like difference between the English copies, nor is it possible now to know which of them is authentic. The Bishops and Clergy in 1562, subscribed Archbishop *Parker's* Latin copy, and it is likely they subscribed a Latin copy revised, in the Convocation of 1571. But the Act of Parliament of that year refers to an English book, and how that copy agreed with that now in use, is totally unknown. It may be said however with great truth, that, on account of the abovementioned differences, the articles now subscribed, are not the Articles agreed upon in the Convocation of 1562. There is likewise a fallacy in the *Ratification* as it stands at present, with respect to the Queen's consent, as if both books of Articles were precisely the same,

same, and equally *approved* by her Majesty; whereas the words subjoined to the Latin Articles of 1562, so far as the Queen's authority is concerned, are these, *Quibus omnibus Articulis serenissima Princeps Elizabeth, Dei gratia Angliæ, Franciæ et Hiberniæ Regina, fidei Defensor, &c. per seipsam diligenter prius lectis et examinatis, suum assensum præbuit*; which her Majesty might do without imposing Subscription to them on her subjects.

[G] IN the year 1564 were published, Advertisements partly for due order in the public administration of the Sacraments, and partly for the Apparel of all persons Ecclesiastical. The Title of the last section is, "Protestations to be made, promised and subscribed by them that shall hereafter be admitted to any office, room or cure in any church, or other place Ecclesiastical." Under this Title are the following Protestations; "I shall not preach or publicly interpret, but only read what is appointed by public authority, without special licence of the Bishop under his Seal. I do also faithfully promise in my person—to observe, keep and maintain such order and uniformity in all external Policy, Rites and Ceremonies of the Church, as by the Laws, good Usages and Orders, are already well provided and established." *Sparrow's Collection.*

Rem.—What is here provided against, by this Protestation and Subscription, was in a great measure secured by the Act of Uniformity, save in the Article of preaching and interpreting, concerning which there seems to have been no Law or Ordinance in being at that time, except the Queen's Injunctions of 1559; which were not understood then to have the force, or to make a part of the Laws of this Realm. These advertisements seem to have been calculated by Archbishop *Parker* to take the Clergy intirely into the hands of the Bishops. What opposition these Advertisements met with in the Queen's Council and elsewhere, and how distasteful they were to many considerable men in different departments, may be seen in *Strype's* Life of Archbishop *Parker*, Book 2. chap. xx.

[H] IN the year 1571, An Act of Parliament passed injoyning Subscription in these words; "Every person under the degree of a Bishop which doth or shall pretend to be a Priest or Minister of God's Holy Word and Sacraments, by reason of any other form of institution, consecration or ordering, than the form set forth by Parliament in the time of the late King of most worthy memory, King *Edward* the sixth, or now used in the reign of our most gracious Sovereign Lady, before the feast of the Nativity of *Christ* next following, shall in the presence of the Bishop
or

or the Guardian of the Spiritualities of some one Diocese, where he hath or shall have Ecclesiastical living, declare his assent, and subscribe to all the Articles of Religion, which only concern the Confession of the true Christian Faith, and the Doctrine of the Sacraments, comprised in a Book imprinted, intitled, *Articles whereupon it was agreed, &c.* and shall bring from such Bishop or Guardian of Spiritualities in writing, under his Seal authentic, a Testimonial of such his Assent and Subscription, and openly on some *Sunday* in the time of the public service afternoon in every Church, where, by reason of any Ecclesiastical living he ought to attend, read both the said Testimonial and the said Articles, upon pain that every such person, which shall not before the said feast, do as is above appointed, shall be *ipso facto* deprived, and all his Ecclesiastical promotions shall be void, as if he then were naturally dead." *Statutes 13 Eliz. c. 12.*

Rem.—The noble stand made by the House of Commons in the reign of Queen *Elizabeth* on divers occasions against Ecclesiastical encroachments, and in favour of Religious liberty, plainly shews, that the limiting the Subscription of the Clergy to such Articles "as only concern the Confession of the true Christian faith,

faith, and the doctrine of the Sacraments," in this Act, was no idle provision, or words without meaning. Much has been said concerning the uncertainty, what Articles were not to be subscribed under this restriction, and an argument has been drawn from thence for an unlimited Subscription. It appears however from the Conversation between Archbishop *Parker* and Mr. *Peter Wentworth* in 1571, that the Articles for the Homilies, Consecrating of Bishops and such like, were put out of the book, and were doubtless struck out in the copy annexed to the Bill. And as that copy is now irrecoverable, and as it hath been said, separated by some unfair practice from the Act which refers to it, the Clergy must be left to their own judgement, which of the Articles are or are not excepted in the Statute. Some learned and worthy persons have thought that Subscription to the 6th and 25th Articles is sufficient to satisfy the intention of the Legislature, the rather as the article which concerns the Homilies was certainly intended to be left out; and therefore as most of the doctrinal articles are but abridgements of what the Homilies treat of at more length, the House of Commons had no more time to examine those Articles how they agreed with the word of God, than they had to examine the Homilies, as both must have been examined together. It is only necessary to observe farther, that whatever Articles were enjoined by this Act to be subscribed, the same and no other were to be read and assented to, as prescribed by the subsequent

subsequent Sections of this Statute. See *D'owes's Journal*, p. 239.

[I] IN the same year (1571.) the Bishops put forth a Collection, intituled, *Liber quorundam Canonum Disciplinæ Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ, Anno 1571.* in which, under the Title *de Episcopis*, it is ordained, that persons approved for public preachers, should have their Licences renewed, *ita tamen ut prius subscribant articulis christianæ religionis publice in Synodo approbatis, fidemque dent se velle tueri et defendere doctrinam eam quæ in illis continetur ut consentientissimam veritati verbi divini.* And under the Title *Concionatores*, there is the following injunction. *Et quoniam articuli illi religionis christianæ in quos consensum est ab Episcopis in legitima et sancta synodo, jussu et auctoritate serenissimæ principis Elizabethæ convocata et celebrata haud dubie collecti sunt ex sacris literis veteris et novi Testamenti, et cum cœlesti doctrinâ quæ in illis continetur, per omnia congruunt; quoniam etiam liber publicarum precum, et liber de inauguratione archiepiscoporum, episcoporum, presbyterorum et diaconorum, nihil continent ab illa ipsa doctrina alienum, quicumque mittentur ad docendum populum, illorum articulorum, auctoritatem et fidem, non tantum concionibus suis, sed etiam subscriptione confirmabunt.* Qui

secus fecerit, et contrariâ doctrina populum turbaverit, excommunicabitur. Sparrow's Collection.

Rem.—The intention of these Injunctions for Subscription to the Articles, was to supply, what the Bishops thought the Parliament had left short, namely, to require a Subscription to *all* the Articles, as appears by their making the Subscriber assert their agreement with the word of God, and particularly mentioning the Book of Consecrating of Bishops, &c. It is however certain, that the Queen never gave her Sanction to these Canons, and *Grindal* then Archbishop of *York* “doubted whether they had *vigorem legis*,” [which out of all doubt they had not] “and “thought the Queen’s *verbal* assent would not “serve them, if they should be impleaded in “a Case of *Premunire*,” in which he was very much in the right.

[K] IN the year 1584. the Bishops and Clergy of the Province of *Canterbury* assembled in Convocation, put forth a Collection intituled, *Articuli pro Clero*, in which it was enjoined, that no Bishop should thereafter admit any person to Holy Orders, except he was of his own Diocese, &c. *vel saltem, nisi rationem fidei suæ juxta articulos illos Religionis in Synodo Episcoporum et cleri approbatos latino sermone reddere possit, adeo ut sacrarum literarum testimonia quibus eorundem*

eorundem Articulorum veritas innititur recitare etiam valeat. Sparrow's Collection.

Rem.—Archbishop *Whitgift* was now promoted to *Canterbury*. His predecessor *Grindal* had complained greatly of the ignorance of the Clergy, and had used his utmost endeavours to supply the Church with abler men; but generally without effect. By this time, it is likely, the Bishops began to see the impropriety of requiring Subscription of poor Curates and Candidates for Orders to a set of Articles of which they knew so little; and to obviate any reproach that might arise from this practice, enjoined the examination mentioned in these Canons. And had they stuck to this expedient, it may easily be imagined they must not have ordained a Tithe of the Candidates who aspired to the Priesthood. Perhaps very few at this day would undertake to recite the testimonies of Holy writ, on which the truth of these Articles depends. The Spirited Commons, however, became sensible of this arbitrary imposition, and in the Parliament of 1585 petitioned the House of Lords, among other matters relating to the Church, “ That for the encourage-
 “ ment of many to enter into the Ministry
 “ which are kept back by some conditions of
 “ Oaths and Subscriptions whereof they make
 “ scruple, it may be considered, whether this
 “ favour may be shewed them, that hereafter
 “ no Oath or Subscription be tendered to any
 “ that is to enter into the Ministry, or to any
 “ Benefice with Cure, or to any place of preach-
 “ ing

ing, but such only as be expressly prescribed
 “ by the Statutes of this Realm; save only that
 “ it shall be lawful for every Ordinary to try
 “ any Ministers presented to any Benefice
 “ within his Dioceſe by his Oath, whether he
 “ is to enter corruptly or incorruptly into the
 “ ſame.” *Dewes’s Journal*, p. 358. It is hum-
 bly preſumed, that the Answer of the Arch-
 biſhop of *York* to this reaſonable Petition, is far
 from being ſatisfactory upon Proteſtant prin-
 ciples.

[L] In the year 1597 were put forth,
Capitula ſive Constitutiones Eccleſiaſticæ, by
 the Archbiſhop, Biſhops, and Clergy of the
 Province of *Canterbury* aſſembled in Con-
 vocation, ſaid in the Title-page to be con-
 firmed under the Great Seal of *England*.
 In this collection, the requiſite qualifica-
 tion of Miniſters, ſo far as relates to the
 Articles, is preſcribed in the ſame words.
Sparrow’s Collection.

Rem.—By this time Archbiſhop *Whitgift* had
 ſo far eſtabliſhed his power that all oppoſition
 to his ſystem of Diſcipline became fruitleſs even
 in Parliament. *Strype* relates that, “ a great
 “ heap of Grievances in the Church were thrown
 “ into the Parliament [of 1597] by Bills put in
 “ by divers perſons; but were not read, by
 “ means, no doubt, of ſome higher influence.”
 Among others, “ A grievance no way inferior
 “ to the former the ungodly uſe of the Statute
 “ of

“ of 13 *Eliz.* concerning Faith and Sacraments,
 “ by which men are forced to Subscription,
 “ and forced to accuse themselves,” i. e. by declaring their dissent from such Articles as did not concern Faith and Sacraments. N. B. These Canons were confirmed under the Great Seal, and they seem chiefly to aim at reforming some abuses in the Ecclesiastical courts ; by way, one may suppose, of precluding enquiries into such matters, in Parliament. *Strype's Life of Whitgift*, p. 509.

[M] IN the year 1603, the Convocation composed the Book of Canons now in use, the thirty-sixth of which enjoins Subscription, 1. To the King's Supremacy. 2. To the Book of Common Prayer, as containing in it nothing contrary to the word of God. 3. To the thirty-nine Articles, acknowledging all and every the said Articles to be agreeable to the word of God. Which Subscription is to be made in this form of words, “ I N. N. do willingly and *ex animo* subscribe to these three Articles above-mentioned, and to all that are contained in them.” The Royal assent to these Canons is attested under the Great Seal of *England* *.

Rem.—It is questionable how far these Canons are binding. Some great authorities say, they have no force with respect to the Laity, and that they bind the Clergy only by virtue of their Oath of

* See the *GRACE* annexed.

Canonical obedience, which however is limited to *things lawful and honest*, and what is *lawful and honest* in Canonical commands or injunctions cannot *in equity* be determined before the Person against whom the crime of disobedience is committed. It is against the principles of justice, and the genius of the British constitution, that the same man should be both judge and party. Prohibitions from the temporal Courts lye against the Courts ecclesiastical, in cases which concern the Clergy as well as the laity. Why should not the case of this Canonical Subscription (as the temporalities of beneficed Clerks are *now* made to depend upon a compliance with it) be subject to the verdict of twelve men, as other cases of less importance are made to be, by the Act 1. *Eliz.* cap. 2? Very many of these Canons are totally fallen into disuse, on account of the impracticability of carrying them into execution. Others, which might be executed, are wholly neglected, possibly because the execution of them might set the exercise of Canonical discipline in so many trifling matters, in too odious a light. But can any thing be more odious than to compel a learned and Protestant clergy to subscribe implicitly to all these antiquated propositions, on the pain of being excluded from the benefit of any temporal emolument in the Church, where they might be of the greatest use to the people?

[N] IN the year 1613. A Grace was passed by the University of *Cambridge*, in consequence of Letters from King *James I.*

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prescribing Subscription to the three Articles in the 36th Canon to the Candidates for the Degree of Batchelor of Divinity, and of Doctor in each faculty *.

[O] IN the year 1616, the King (*James I.*) sent directions to Dr. *John Hill*, then Vice Chancellor, and the Heads of Houses in the University of *Cambridge*, signifying his pleasure that he would have *all* who take any degree in the Schools, to subscribe to these Articles.

Rem.—Remarks on these Royal Directions, will be found under the Letter [S].

[P] IN the year 1628 King *Charles I.* caused the 39 Articles to be republished, prefixing thereto a *Declaration*, prohibiting the least difference from the said Articles, and consigning those who should affix any new sense to any Article to the Church's censure in his Majesty's Commission Ecclesiastical, declaring that his Majesty would see due execution done upon them.

Rem.—Nothing can be more inconsistent than to continue this Declaration at the head of the 39 Articles, while every Subscriber is, by Canon 36, confined to a particular invariable form of words, in expressing his assent and consent to

* See the *GRACE* annexed.

them; nor can any judgment be made, where an article is ambiguously expressed, which of the senses given to it by different interpreters, may be called *drawing it aside from the plain and full meaning thereof*: Nor is the punishment threatened, for offences against this declaration, now possible to be executed, as, thanks be to God and a virtuous Legislature, the Commission ecclesiastical, to which the Offender is consigned for his censure, is no longer in being.

[Q] IN the year 1640 were framed by the Archbishops, Bishops, and Clergy in Convocation, Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiastical, in the sixth of which an Oath is enjoined to be taken by all Archbishops and Bishops and all other Priests and Deacons, all Masters of Arts (the Sons of Noblemen only excepted) all Batchelors and Doctors in Divinity, Law or Physic, all that are licensed to practise Physic, all Registers, Actuaries and Proctors, all Schoolmasters, all such as being Natives or naturalized, do come to be incorporated into the Universities here, having taken a degree in any foreign University, “that they approve the Doctrine and Discipline or Government established in the Church of *England*, as containing all things necessary to Salvation.” *Sparrow's Collection.*

Rem.—For the objections made to this arbitrary

trary oath, See *Fuller's Church Hist.* xi. Book, p. 170, 171. And *Heylin's Life of Archbp. Laud*, p. 443.

[R] December 16: 1640. Upon a debate in the House of Commons concerning these Canons, it was resolved, *nemine Contradicente*, "that the Clergy of *England* convened in a Convocation or Synod, or otherwise, have no power to make any Constitutions, Canons or Act whatsoever in matter of Doctrine, Discipline or otherwise, to bind the Clergy or Laity of the land, without common consent of Parliament." And at the same time it was unanimously resolved "that these particular Canons do contain in them matter contrary to the King's Prerogative, the fundamental Laws and Statutes of the Realm, to the Rights of Parliament, to the property and liberty of the Subjects, and matters tending to sedition, and of dangerous consequence." *Rushworth*, Vol. IV. p. 112.

Rem.—This Resolution most certainly reprobated the Canons of 1603, as well as those of 1640. The former, any more than the latter, never had any common consent of Parliament. It is in vain to pretend that this vote was passed in times of irregularity. The forms of Parliament were never more solemnly or religiously observed: and, as it seems, this resolution is not at all different

different from the language of the Statute 13 *Car.* 2. chap. xii. wherein it is said, that nothing in that Statute shall be construed “ to confirm
 “ the Canons made in the Year 1640, nor any
 “ of them, nor any other Ecclesiastical laws or
 “ canons not formerly confirmed, allowed or
 “ enacted by Parliament, or by the established
 “ Laws of the Land, as they stood in the year
 “ of our Lord 1639.” The Canons of 1603, had no *establishment* but King *James’s* License and Ratification: and no less had the Canons of 1640, the License and Ratification of King *Charles I.* And if ever the matter should come to a fair Trial, King *James’s* Canons could no more stand before the established Law of the Land, than those of King *Charles*. And whatever authority one of these Princes derived from the 25th of *Hen.* 8. the other had equally the same.

[S] *January* 19 : 1640-41. “ Upon Mr. *White’s* report from the Grand Committee for Religion, it was resolved upon the question, that the Statute made about twenty-seven years ago in the University of *Cambridge*, imposing upon young Students a Subscription according to the 36th Article of the Canons, made in the Year 1603, is against the Law and Liberty of the Subject, and ought not to be pressed upon any Student or Graduates whatsoever.” *Ibid.* p. 149.

Rem.—From the manner in which this Resolution

lution is expressed, it is probable the Case stood thus. King *James's* Letters to the University required Subscription of Batchelors in Divinity and Doctors in each Faculty. This became a *Statute*, but was probably extended to other graduates *pro arbitrio*, and this being objected to, the University might apply in 1616 to the King for his *farther* pleasure in this matter, and the affair coming before the Parliament in 1640, they seem to have taken both orders together. Otherwise it is certain that the Statute of 1613 extends to no *younger students* than Batchelors in Divinity, and Doctors in each Faculty. But this is wholly conjectural. The material observation is, that the whole Practice is justly and severely condemned in a most wise and righteous Parliament.

[T] IN the year 1662. 13 & 14 *Car. II.* was passed the last Act of Uniformity, by which Subscription to the Declaration of Conformity to the Liturgy of the Church of *England*, as by Law established, is required of every Dean, Canon, Prebendary of every Cathedral or Collegiate Church, and of all Masters and other Heads, Fellows, Chaplains and Tutors, of or in any College, Hall, House of learning or Hospital, and of every public Professor and Reader in either of the Universities, and in every College elsewhere, and of every Parson, Vicar, Curate, Lecturer, and of every other person in holy Orders, and every Schoolmaster keeping any

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public

public or private School, and of every person instructing or teaching any Youth in any house or private family as a Tutor or Schoolmaster. And by the same Statute Subscription unto the nine-and-thirty Articles mentioned in the Statute made in the 13th year of the reign of the late Queen *Elizabeth*, is required of the Governor or Head of every College or Hall in either of the Universities, and of the Colleges of *Westminster*, *Winchester* and *Eaton*, and all upon the pain of forfeiting their respective offices or preferments, from the Dean down to the petty Schoolmaster.

Rem.—This vindictive Statute, having now compleatly done its work, and occasioned such a variety of distress from the Restoration to this present hour, to such of the clergy as could not assent to the principles of King *Charles* the second's Bishops, may now, we hope, be softened and qualified, without any detriment to the Church of *England*. Neither King, Lords nor Commons have any thing to fear from the mutinous spirit of a peevish, irritated and obstinate generation of Nonconformists. The Toleration laws have rendered Protestant Dissenters of all Denominations, peaceable, rational and valuable Subjects to the Civil Government; and the Clergy of the established Church, who solicit a relaxation of their present bonds, derive their pretensions only from the original principles of the Protestant reformation, and those generous
maxims

maxims of Civil and Ecclesiastical policy which give a sanction to the Revolution of 1688, and to the Settlement of the Crown in the lineage of our most gracious Sovereign, to whom and his Royal House they profess the most sincere and cordial attachment. They fly for assistance on the present occasion to that august Body, who have ever been the Protectors of the Rights and Privileges of the *British* Subject, and who have in many periods of our History, from the first dawn of Reformation, shewn their care and concern to deliver the pious and conscientious Clergy, not only from the oppressions of the Roman Pontiff, but from the attempts and encroachments of many in high places, whose ambition disposed them to establish the like usurpations, under a more plausible pretext. The time is now come, they hope, when a candid hearing will be given to their reasonable and modest Remonstrances, and all obstructions to their relief removed, which are founded in nothing, but a desire of exercising a despotic Rule over the Consciences, or in pretended fears and apprehensions of Consequences, which can have no place, where the freedom solicited has no other object than the promotion of peace and unity, virtue and true piety among Clergy and People in the present state of things, and the everlasting Salvation of all in the world to come.

T H E
A R T I C L E S

To be subscribed unto by all persons, before they are admitted to any Degree; with the GRACE passed in the year 1613, and King *James's* DIRECTION to the V. Chancellor and Heads of Houses, enjoining Subscription to those Articles :

To which is added,

The RESOLUTION of the House of Commons concerning the said GRACE.

I. *Articles to be subscribed unto, &c.*

1. **T**HAT the King's Majesty, under God, is the only supreme Governor of this Realm, and all other his Highness's Dominions and Countries, as well in spiritual or ecclesiastical things or causes, as temporal ; and that no foreign Prince, Person, Prelate, State or Potentate, hath, or ought

ought to have, any jurisdiction, power, superiority, pre-eminence or authority, ecclesiastical or spiritual, within his Majesty's said realms, dominions, and countries.

2. THAT the book of Common Prayer, and of ordering of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, *containeth in it nothing contrary to the word of God*, and that it may lawfully be used, and that he himself will use the form in the said book prescribed, in public prayer and administration of the Sacraments, and no other.

3. THAT He alloweth the book of Articles agreed on by the Archbishops and Bishops of both Provinces, and the whole Clergy, in the Convocation holden at *London* in the year 1562. and that *He acknowledgeth all and every the Articles therein contained* (being in number 39. besides the ratification) *to be agreeable to the Word of God.*

WE whose names are underwritten do *willingly and ex animo* subscribe to the *three Articles* before mentioned and to *all things* in them contained.

Excerpta è Stat. Acad. Cantab. p. 25.

II. *The Grace by which Subscription to these Articles is required of Candidates for the Degree of Bachelor in Divinity, and of Doctor in each Faculty.*

Jun. 2do, 1613. Placeat Vobis, ut juxta tenorem Literarum a Serenissimo Rege *Jacobo* missarum, hoc in Senatu decernatur; ut nullus in posterum sibi concessam habeat Gratiam pro Gradu Baccalaureatus in Theologia, vel Doctoratus in aliqua Facultate adipiscendo, qui non prius coram Domino Procancellario, aut ejus deputato, tribus Articulis, sc. regii Primatus, Liturgiæ *Anglicanæ*, et Articulorum Religionis de quibus convenerunt Archiepiscopi et Episcopi A. D. 1572, propria manu sua subscripserit. Et ut hæc concessio vestra loco statuti habeatur, et in libris Procuratorum infra decem dies inscribatur.

III. *King James's Direction to the V. Chancellor and Heads of Houses in the University of Cambridge, given by himself to Dr. Hills, Vice Chancellor, &c. on Dec. 3. 1616, at Newmarket.*

“ His Majesty signified his pleasure that
 “ he would have all that take *any* degree
 “ in

“ In Schools to subscribe to the *three*
 “ *Articles.*”

AFTER some other directions, the King ordered “ that Mr. V. Chancellor and the two Professors of Divinity, or two of the Heads of Houses, do every *Michaelmas*, when His Majesty resorts unto these parts, wait upon His Majesty, and give Him a just account how these His Majesty’s instructions are observed.”

A COPY of these Directions written or at least signed by the King himself, was soon afterwards sent by the Bishop of *Winchester* to the V. Chancellor, with the following letter.

To the Right Worshipful Dr. *Hills*,
 Master of *Catherine Hall*, and V. Chan-
 cellor of *Cambridge*,

Good Mr. V. Chancellor,

I have sent you his Majesty’s hand to his own Directions. I think you have no precedent, that ever a King, first with his own mouth, then with his own hand, gave such directions; and therefore you shall do very well to keep that writing curiously, and the directions religiously, and to give his Ma-
 4 jesty

jesty a good account of them carefully; which I pray God you may; and so with my Love to yourself, and the rest of the Heads, I commit you to God. From Court this 12th day of *Dec.* 1616.

Your very loving Friend,

James Winton.

IV. *The Resolution of the House of Commons concerning the Grace passed by the University of Cambridge in the year 1613.*

IN the year 1640, upon the Report from the Grand Committee of Religion, it was resolved by the House of Commons, "That the Statute made about 27 years since in the University of *Cambridge*, imposing upon young Scholars a Subscription according to the 36th Article of the Canons made in the year 1603, is against the Law and Liberty of the Subject, and ought not to be pressed upon any Student or Graduates whatsoever."

Rushworth's Historical Collect. vol. 4. p. 149.

THE author of the History of the Puritans, after citing this Resolution of the House of Commons, takes notice, "that about five months forwards they passed the same resolution for *Oxford*, which was not unreasonable, because the *Universities* had
not

not an unlimited power by the 36th Canon to call upon *all their Students* to subscribe, but only upon such *Lecturers or Readers of Divinity* whom they had a privilege of licensing; and to this I conceive the last words of the Canon refer; *if either of the Universities offend therein, we leave them to the danger of the law, and his Majesty's censure.*

“ AND it ought to be remembered, that all the *proceedings* of the House of Commons this year in punishing *delinquents*, and all their *Votes* and *Resolutions* about the circumstances of public worship, had no other view, than the cutting off those *illegal additions* and *innovations* which the superstition of the late times had introduced, and reducing the discipline of the Church to the standard of *Statute law*. No man was punished for acting according to law; but the displeasure of the house ran high against those, who in their public ministrations, or in their ecclesiastical courts, had *bound those things upon the Subject*, which were either *contrary* to the laws of the land, or about which the laws were altogether *silent*.”

Neal's Hist. of the Puritans, vol. 1. 4to. p. 665.

The Form of a Grace for the Removal of Subscription to the three Articles contained in the 36th Canon.

PLACEAT vobis, ut illi, qui Munia Scholastica in Regiis Statutis contenta expleverint, in posterum sibi concessam habeant Gratiam pro Gradu in aliqua Facultate suscipiendo, etsi tribus Articulis in Canone tricesimo sexto comprehensis non subscripserint.

THIS GRACE was offered at *Cambridge*, on the 11th of *June* 1771.

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